DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 230 072 FL 013 769

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TITLE ACTFL Provisional Proficiency Guidelines.
INSTITUTION American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, New York, N.Y.
SPONS AGENCY Office of International Education (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE [82]
GRANT G008103203
NOTE 46p.
PUB TYPE Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160) -- Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Objectives; French; German; Higher Education; *Language Proficiency; Language Skills; *Language Tests; Second Language Learning; Spanish; Student Evaluation

ABSTRACT

This is a set of generic proficiency goals in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and culture developed for all languages and for French, German, and Spanish specifically. Both the common and specific goals are being field tested to determine their utility for college and university language instructors. In addition, a questionnaire has been distributed to elicit comments about the field testing. The majority of respondents reported that the four skill area statements comprised a coherent set of language proficiency guidelines. The culture guidelines, however, represent an attempt to break new ground in quantifying cultural skills acquisition. Future plans for the language proficiency project include a summer institute on proficiency for secondary language teachers, which will focus on oral proficiency interviewing and rating and the development of proficiency based curricula. The final report on the project, "A Design for Measuring and Communicating Foreign Language Proficiency," is appended. (RW)

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ACTFL
PROVISIONAL
PROFICIENCY GUIDELINES

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This project

A DESIGN FOR MEASURING AND COMMUNICATING
FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

was funded by a grant (#G008 103203)
from the International Research and Studies Program
of the U.S. Department of Education

ACTFL has been interested in promoting the notion of proficiency-based foreign language teaching and learning for some time. In 1981 the ACTFL Executive Council targeted language proficiency as one of the organization's priority areas. Grants from the Department of Education have enabled ACTFL to provide training workshops on oral proficiency interviewing and rating, based on techniques endorsed by the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) and modified by ACTFL and Educational Testing Service for academic application. The first workshop was held in early 1982, and participants report having begun incorporating the techniques acquired in the workshop into their teaching.

Evolving in tandem with the work in oral proficiency interviewing and rating is a second project, also funded by the Department of Education, to create proficiency guidelines for the other modalities. Modeled on the rating descriptions used in the oral interview, these guidelines address speaking, listening, reading, writing, and culture. They are designed to guide curriculum and materials development as well as to provide a graduated sequence of learning goals for teachers and students. These guidelines will serve as the basis for future training workshops, funded by National Endowment for the Humanities and Department of Education, in which oral interview training will be coordinated with proficiency-based curriculum design.

There is great potential for the impact of these guidelines on foreign language instruction. Measurable proficiency goals will form the basis for curriculum planning and classroom teaching. Students will more quickly develop a sense of accomplishment and will be able to refer to these "yardsticks" to measure their progress. The complex problem of articulation, the coordination of content between grade and course levels, can also begin to be addressed. Student evaluation and placement can be based on actual language proficiency instead of on inaccurate and relatively uninformative measures of "seat time." It is important to stress that the guidelines are not meant to be a substitute for methodology. On the contrary, they may be used with a range of methodologies, techniques, materials and texts and should, therefore, be more appropriately regarded as an organizing principle or system.

You are encouraged to experiment with these guidelines in your daily teaching and to share them with your colleagues. To aid ACTFL in perfecting these provisional guidelines and in developing proficiency guidelines in additional languages, please review the guidelines and return the inserted questionnaire. ACTFL looks forward to receiving your comments and your suggestions.

ACTFL would like to thank the following educators who worked so diligently to create these guidelines:

Sabine Atwell
Jeannette D. Bragger
Raymonde Brown
Kathryn Buck
James Child
Ray T. Clifford
Barbara F. Freed
Gail Guntermann
Charles R. Hancock
Juana A. Hernández
Theodore V. Higgs
Nancy A. Humbach
Joseph Labat
Dale L. Lange*
Nina Levinson
Judith E. Liskin-Gasparro*
Helene Z. Loew
Pardee Lowe, Jr.*
Frankie McCullough
Howard L. Nostrand
Alice C. Omaggio*
June K. Phillips*
Micheline Ponder
Claus Reschke
Jean-Charles Seigneuret
Dagmar Waters
Eugene Weber

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ACTFL would also like to thank James Frith, Julia Petrov, and Richard T. Thompson for their support of this project. Special acknowledgment goes to Protase E. Woodford for the part he has played for many years in promoting proficiency-based teaching and learning.

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Provisional Generic Descriptions—Speaking

Novice—Low	Unable to function in the spoken language. Oral production is limited to occasional isolated words. Essentially no communicative ability.
Novice—Mid	Able to operate only in a very limited capacity within very predictable areas of need. Vocabulary limited to that necessary to express simple elementary needs and basic courtesy formulae. Syntax is fragmented, inflections and word endings frequently omitted, confused or distorted and the majority of utterances consist of isolated words or short formulae. Utterances rarely consist of more than two or three words and are marked by frequent long pauses and repetition of an interlocutor's words. Pronunciation is frequently unintelligible and is strongly influenced by first language. Can be understood only with difficulty, even by persons such as teachers who are used to speaking with non-native speakers or in interactions where the context strongly supports the utterance.
Novice—High	Able to satisfy immediate needs using learned utterances. Can ask questions or make statements with reasonable accuracy only where this involves short memorized utterances or formulae. There is no real autonomy of expression, although there may be some emerging signs of spontaneity and flexibility. There is a slight increase in utterance length but frequent long pauses and repetition of interlocutor's words still occur. Most utterances are telegraphic and word endings are often omitted, confused or distorted. Vocabulary is limited to areas of immediate survival needs. Can differentiate most phonemes when produced in isolation but when they are combined in words or groups of words, errors are frequent and, even with repetition, may severely inhibit communication even with persons used to dealing with such learners. Little development in stress and intonation is evident.
Intermediate—Low	Able to satisfy basic survival needs and minimum courtesy requirements. In areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics, can ask and answer simple questions, initiate and respond to simple statements, and maintain very simple face-to-face conversations. When asked to do so, is able to formulate some questions with limited constructions and much inaccuracy. Almost every utterance contains fractured syntax and other grammatical errors. Vocabulary inadequate to express anything but the most elementary needs. Strong interference from native language occurs in articulation, stress and intonation. Misunderstandings frequently arise from limited vocabulary and grammar and erroneous phonology but, with repetition, can generally be understood by native speakers in regular contact with foreigners attempting to speak their language. Little precision in information conveyed owing to tentative state of grammatical development and little or no use of modifiers.
Intermediate—Mid	Able to satisfy some survival needs and some limited social demands. Is able to formulate some questions when asked to do so. Vocabulary permits discussion of topics beyond basic survival needs such as personal history and leisure time activities. Some evidence of grammatical accuracy in basic constructions, for example, subject-verb agreement, noun-adjective agreement, some notion of inflection.
Intermediate—High	Able to satisfy most survival needs and limited social demands. Shows some spontaneity in language production but fluency is very uneven. Can initiate and sustain a general conversation but has little understanding of the social conventions of conversation. Developing flexibility in a range of circumstances beyond immediate survival needs. Limited vocabulary range necessitates much hesitation and circumlocution. The commoner tense forms occur but errors are frequent in formation and selection. Can use most question forms. While some word order is established, errors still occur in more complex patterns. Cannot sustain coherent structures in longer utterances or unfamiliar situations. Ability to describe and give precise information is limited. Aware of basic cohesive features such as pronouns and verb inflections, but many are unreliable, especially if less immediate in reference. Extended discourse is largely a series of short, discrete utterances. Articulation is comprehensible to native speakers used to dealing with foreigners, and can combine most phonemes with reasonable comprehensibility, but still has difficulty in producing certain sounds, in certain positions, or in certain combinations, and speech will usually be labored. Still has to repeat utterances frequently to be understood by the general public. Able to produce some narration in either past or future.
Advanced	Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements. Can handle with confidence but not with facility most social situations including introductions and casual conversations about current events, as well as work, family, and autobiographical information; can handle limited work requirements, needing help in handling any complications or difficulties. Has a speaking vocabulary sufficient to respond simply with some circumlocutions; accent, though often quite faulty, is intelligible; can usually handle elementary constructions quite accurately but does not have thorough or confident control of the grammar.

Advanced Plus	Able to satisfy most work requirements and show some ability to communicate on concrete topics relating to particular interests and special fields of competence. Generally strong in either grammar or vocabulary, but not in both. Weaknesses or unevenness in one of the foregoing or in pronunciation result in occasional miscommunication. Areas of weakness range from simple constructions such as plurals, articles, prepositions, and negatives to more complex structures such as tense usage, passive constructions, word order, and relative clauses. Normally controls general vocabulary with some groping for everyday vocabulary still evident. Often shows remarkable fluency and ease of speech, but under tension or pressure language may break down.
Superior	Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and professional topics. Can discuss particular interests and special fields of competence with reasonable ease. Vocabulary is broad enough that speaker rarely has to grope for a word; accent may be obviously foreign; control of grammar good; errors virtually never interfere with understanding and rarely disturb the native speaker.

Provisional Generic Descriptions—Listening

Novice—Low	No practical understanding of the spoken language. Understanding limited to occasional isolated words, such as cognates, borrowed words, and high frequency social conventions. Essentially no ability to comprehend even short utterances.
Novice—Mid	Sufficient comprehension to understand some memorized words within predictable areas of need. Vocabulary for comprehension limited to simple elementary needs and basic courtesy formulae. Utterances understood rarely exceed more than two or three words at a time and ability to understand is characterized by long pauses for assimilation and by repeated requests on the listener's part for repetition, and/or a slower rate of speech. Confuses words that sound similar.
Novice—High	Sufficient comprehension to understand a number of memorized utterances in areas of immediate need. Comprehands slightly longer utterances in situations where the context aids understanding, such as at the table, in a restaurant/store, in a train/bus. Phrases recognized have for the most part been memorized. Comprehends vocabulary common to daily needs. Comprehends simple questions/statements about family members, age, address, weather, time, daily activities and interests. Misunderstandings arise from failure to perceive critical sounds or endings. Understands even standard speech with difficulty but gets some main ideas. Often requires repetition and/or a slowed rate of speed for comprehension, even when listening to persons such as teachers who are used to speaking with non-natives.
Intermediate—Low	Sufficient comprehension to understand utterances about basic survival needs, minimum courtesy and travel requirements. In areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics, can understand non-memorized material, such as simple questions and answers, statements, and face-to-face conversations in the standard language. Comprehension areas include basic needs: meals, lodging, transportation, time, simple instructions (e.g., route directions) and routine commands (e.g., from customs officials, police). Understands main ideas. Misunderstandings frequently arise from lack of vocabulary or faulty processing of syntactic information often caused by strong interference from the native language or by the imperfect and partial acquisition of the target grammar.
Intermediate—Mid	Sufficient comprehension to understand simple conversations about some survival needs and some limited social conventions. Vocabulary permits understanding of topics beyond basic survival needs such as personal history and leisure time activities. Evidence of understanding basic constructions, for example, subject-verb agreement, noun-adjective agreement; evidence that some inflection is understood.
Intermediate—High	Sufficient comprehension to understand short conversations about most survival needs and limited social conventions. Increasingly able to understand topics beyond immediate survival needs. Shows spontaneity in understanding, but speed and consistency of understanding uneven. Limited vocabulary range necessitates repetition for understanding. Understands commoner tense forms and some word order patterns, including most question forms, but miscommunication still occurs with more complex patterns. Can get the gist of conversations, but cannot sustain comprehension in longer utterances or in unfamiliar situations. Understanding of descriptions and detailed information is limited. Aware of basic cohesive features such as pronouns and verb inflections, but many are unreliably understood, especially if other material intervenes. Understanding is largely limited to a series of short, discrete utterances. Still has to ask for utterances to be repeated. Some ability to understand the facts.

Advanced	Sufficient comprehension to understand conversations about routine social conventions and limited school or work requirements. Able to understand face-to-face speech in the standard language, delivered at a normal rate with some repetition and rewording, by a native speaker not used to dealing with foreigners. Understands everyday topics, common personal and family news, well-known current events, and routine matters involving school or work; descriptions and narration about current, past and future events; and essential points of discussion or speech at an elementary level on topics in special fields of interest.
Advanced Plus	Sufficient comprehension to understand most routine social conventions, conversations on school or work requirements, and discussions on concrete topics related to particular interests and special fields of competence. Often shows remarkable ability and ease of understanding, but comprehension may break down under tension or pressure, including unfavorable listening conditions. Candidate may display weakness or deficiency due to inadequate vocabulary base or less than secure knowledge of grammar and syntax. Normally understands general vocabulary with some hesitant understanding of everyday vocabulary still evident. Can sometimes detect emotional overtones. Some ability to understand between the lines, i.e., to make inferences.
Superior	Sufficient comprehension to understand the essentials of all speech in standard dialects, including technical discussions within a special field. Has sufficient understanding of face-to-face speech, delivered with normal clarity and speed in standard language, on general topics and areas of special interest; understands hypothesizing and supported opinions. Has broad enough vocabulary that rarely has to ask for paraphrasing or explanation. Can follow accurately the essentials of conversations between educated native speakers, reasonably clear telephone calls, radio broadcasts, standard news items, oral reports, some oral technical reports, and public addresses on non-technical subjects. May not understand native speakers if they speak very quickly or use some slang or unfamiliar dialect. Can often detect emotional overtones. Can understand "between the lines" (i.e., make inferences).

Provisional Generic Descriptions—Reading

Novice—Low	No functional ability in reading the foreign language.
Novice—Mid	Sufficient understanding of the written language to interpret highly contextualized words or cognates within predictable areas. Vocabulary for comprehension limited to simple elementary needs such as names, addresses, dates, street signs, building names, short informative signs (e.g., no smoking, entrance/exit) and formulaic vocabulary requesting same. Material understood rarely exceeds a single phrase and comprehension requires successive rereading and checking.
Novice—High	Sufficient comprehension of the written language to interpret set expressions in areas of immediate need. Can recognize all the letters in the printed version of an alphabetic system and high-frequency elements of a syllabary or a character system. Where vocabulary has been mastered can read for instruction and directional purposes standardized messages, phrases or expressions such as some items on menus, schedules, timetables, maps and signs indicating hours of operation, social codes, and traffic regulations. This material is read only for essential information. Detail is overlooked or misunderstood.
Intermediate—Low	Sufficient comprehension to understand in printed form the simplest connected material, either authentic or specially prepared, dealing with basic survival and social needs. Able to understand both mastered material and recombinations of the mastered elements that achieve meanings at the same level. Understands main ideas in material whose structures and syntax parallel the native language. Can read messages, greetings, statements of social amenities or other simple language containing only the highest frequency grammatical patterns and vocabulary items including cognates (if appropriate). Misunderstandings arise when syntax diverges from that of the native language or when grammatical cues are overlooked.
Intermediate—Mid	Sufficient comprehension to understand in printed form simple discourse for informative or social purposes. In response to perceived needs can read for information material such as announcements of public events, popular advertising, notes containing biographical information or narration of events, and straightforward newspaper headlines and story titles. Can guess at unfamiliar vocabulary if highly contextualized. Relies primarily on adverbs as time indicators. Has some difficulty with the cohesive factors in discourse, such as matching pronouns with referents. May have to read material several times before understanding.
Intermediate—High	Sufficient comprehension to understand a simple paragraph for personal communication, information or recreational purposes. Can read with understanding social notes, letters and invitations; can locate and

derive main ideas of the introductory/summary paragraphs from high interest or familiar news or other informational sources; can read for pleasure specially prepared, or some uncomplicated authentic prose, such as fictional narratives or cultural information. Shows spontaneity in reading by ability to guess at meaning from context. Understands common time indicators and can interpret some cohesive factors such as objective pronouns and simple clause connectors. Begins to relate sentences in the discourse to advance meaning, but cannot sustain understanding of longer discourse on unfamiliar topics. Misinterpretation still occurs with more complex patterns.

Advanced — Sufficient comprehension to read simple authentic printed material or edited textual material within a familiar context. Can read uncomplicated but authentic prose on familiar subjects containing description and narration such as news items describing frequently occurring events, simple biographic information, social notices, and standard business letters. Can read edited texts such as prose fiction and contemporary culture. The prose is predominantly in familiar sentence patterns. Can follow essential points of written discussion at level of main ideas and some supporting ones with topics in a field of interest or where background exists. Some misunderstandings. Able to read the facts but cannot draw inferences.

Advanced Plus — Sufficient comprehension to understand most factual information in non-technical prose as well as some discussions on concrete topics related to special interests. Able to read for information and description, to follow sequence of events, and to react to that information. Is able to separate main ideas from lesser ones, and uses that division to advance understanding. Can locate and interpret main ideas and details in material written for the general public. Will begin to guess sensibly at new words by using linguistic context and prior knowledge. May react personally to material but does not yet detect subjective attitudes, values, or judgments in the writing.

Superior — Able to read standard newspaper items addressed to the general reader, routine correspondence reports and technical material in a field of interest at a normal rate of speed (at least 220 wpm). Readers can gain new knowledge from material on unfamiliar topics in areas of a general nature. Can interpret hypotheses, supported opinions and conjectures. Can also read short stories, novels, and other recreational literature accessible to the general public. Reading ability is not subject-matter dependent. Has broad enough general vocabulary that successful guessing resolves problems with complex structures and low-frequency idioms. Misreading is rare. Almost always produces correct interpretation. Able to read between the lines. May be unable to appreciate nuance or stylistics.

Provisional Generic Descriptions—Writing

Novice—Low — No functional ability in writing the foreign language.

Novice—Mid — No practical communicative writing skills. Able to copy isolated words or short phrases. Able to transcribe previously studied words or phrases.

Novice—High — Able to write simple fixed expressions and limited memorized material. Can supply information when requested on forms such as hotel registrations and travel documents. Can write names, numbers, dates, one's own nationality, addresses, and other simple biographic information, as well as learned vocabulary, short phrases, and simple lists. Can write all the symbols in an alphabetic or syllabic system or 50 of the most common characters. Can write simple memorized material with frequent misspellings and inaccuracies.

Intermediate—Low — Has sufficient control of the writing system to meet limited practical needs. Can write short messages, such as simple questions or notes, postcards, phone messages, and the like within the scope of limited language experience. Can take simple notes on material dealing with very familiar topics although memory span is extremely limited. Can create statements or questions within the scope of limited language experience. Material produced consists of recombinations of learned vocabulary and structures into simple sentences. Vocabulary is inadequate to express anything but elementary needs. Writing tends to be a loosely organized collection of sentence fragments on a very familiar topic. Makes continual errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation, but writing can be read and understood by a native speaker used to dealing with foreigners. Able to produce appropriately some fundamental sociolinguistic distinctions in formal and familiar style, such as appropriate subject pronouns, titles of address and basic social formulae.

Intermediate—Mid — Sufficient control of writing system to meet some survival needs and some limited social demands. Able to compose short paragraphs or take simple notes on very familiar topics grounded in personal experience. Can discuss likes and dislikes, daily routine, everyday events, and the like. Can express past time, using

content words and time expressions, or with sporadically accurate verbs. Evidence of good control of basic constructions and inflections such as subject-verb agreement, noun-adjective agreement, and straightforward syntactic constructions in present or future time, though errors occasionally occur. May make frequent errors, however, when venturing beyond current level of linguistic competence. When resorting to a dictionary, often is unable to identify appropriate vocabulary, or uses dictionary entry in uninflected form.

Intermediate—High

Sufficient control of writing system to meet most survival needs and limited social demands. Can take notes in some detail on familiar topics, and respond to personal questions using elementary vocabulary and common structures. Can write simple letters, brief synopses and paraphrases, summaries of biographical data and work experience, and short compositions on familiar topics. Can create sentences and short paragraphs relating to most survival needs (food, lodging, transportation, immediate surroundings and situations) and limited social demands. Can relate personal history, discuss topics such as daily life, preferences, and other familiar material. Can express fairly accurately present and future time. Can produce some past verb forms, but not always accurately or with correct usage. Shows good control of elementary vocabulary and some control of basic syntactic patterns but major errors still occur when expressing more complex thoughts. Dictionary usage may still yield incorrect vocabulary of forms, although can use a dictionary to advantage to express simple ideas. Generally cannot use basic cohesive elements of discourse to advantage such as relative constructions, subject pronouns, connectors, etc. Writing, though faulty, is comprehensible to native speakers used to dealing with foreigners.

Advanced

Able to write routine social correspondence and simple discourse of at least several paragraphs on familiar topics. Can write simple social correspondence, take notes, and write cohesive summaries, resumes, and short narratives and descriptions on factual topics. Able to write about everyday topics using both description and narration. Has sufficient writing vocabulary to express himself/herself simply with some circumlocution. Can write about a very limited number of current events or daily situations and express personal preferences and observations in some detail, using basic structures. Still makes common errors in spelling and punctuation, but shows some control of the most common formats and punctuation conventions. Good control of the morphology of the language (in inflected languages) and of the most frequently used syntactic structures. Elementary constructions are usually handled quite accurately, and writing is understandable to a native speaker not used to reading the writing of foreigners. Uses a limited number of cohesive devices such as pronouns and repeated words with good accuracy. Able to join sentences in limited discourse, but has difficulty and makes frequent errors in producing complex sentences. Paragraphs are reasonably unified and coherent.

Advanced Plus

Shows ability to write about most common topics with some precision and in some detail. Can write fairly detailed resumes and summaries and take quite accurate notes. Can write most social and informal business correspondence. Can describe and narrate personal experiences and explain simply points of view in prose discourse. Can write about concrete topics relating to particular interests and special fields of competence. Normally controls general vocabulary with some circumlocution. Often shows remarkable fluency and ease of expression, but under time constraints and pressure language may be inaccurate and/or incomprehensible. Generally strong in either grammar or vocabulary, but not in both. Weaknesses and unevenness in one of the foregoing or in spelling result in occasional miscommunication. Areas of weakness range from simple constructions such as plurals, articles, prepositions, and negatives to more complex structures such as tense usage, passive constructions, word order, and relative clauses. Some misuse of vocabulary still evident. Shows a limited ability to use circumlocution. Uses dictionary to advantage to supply unknown words. Writing is understandable to native speakers not used to reading material written by non-natives, though the style is still obviously foreign.

Superior

Able to use the written language effectively in most formal and informal exchanges on practical, social, and professional topics. Can write most types of correspondence, such as memos and social and business letters, short research papers and statements of position in areas of special interest or in special fields. Can express hypotheses, conjectures, and present arguments or points of view accurately and effectively. Can write about areas of special interest and handle topics in special fields, in addition to most common topics. Good control of a full range of structures, spelling, and a wide general vocabulary allow the writer to convey his/her message accurately, though style may be foreign. Can use complex and compound sentence structures to express ideas clearly and coherently. Uses dictionary with a high degree of accuracy to supply specialized vocabulary. Errors, though sometimes made when using more complex structures, are occasional, and rarely disturb the native speaker. Sporadic errors when using basic structures. Although sensitive to differences in formal and informal style, still cannot tailor writing precisely and accurately to a variety of audiences or styles.

Provisional Generic Descriptions—Culture

Novice	Limited interaction. Behaves with considerateness. Is resourceful in nonverbal communication, but is unreliable in interpretation of nonverbal cues. Is limited in language, as indicated under the listening and speaking skills. Lacks generally the knowledge of culture patterns requisite for survival situations.
Intermediate	Survival competence. Can deal with familiar survival situations and interact with a culture bearer accustomed to foreigners. Uses behavior acquired for the purpose of greeting and leave-taking, expressing wants, asking directions, buying food, using transportation, tipping. Comprehends the response. Makes errors as the result of misunderstanding; miscommunicates, and misapplies assumptions about the culture.
Advanced	Limited social competence. Handles routine social situations successfully with a culture bearer accustomed to foreigners. Shows comprehension of common rules of etiquette, taboos and sensitivities, though home culture predominates. Can make polite requests, accept and refuse invitations, offer and receive gifts, apologize, make introductions, telephone, purchase and bargain, do routine banking. Can discuss a few aspects of the home and the foreign country, such as general current events and policies, as well as a field of personal interest. Does not offend the culture bearer, but some important misunderstandings and miscommunications occur, in interaction with one unaccustomed to foreigners. Is not competent to take part in a formal meeting, or in a group situation where several persons are speaking informally at the same time.
Superior	Working social and professional competence. Can participate in almost all social situations and those within one vocation. Handles unfamiliar types of situations with ease and sensitivity, including some involving common taboos, or other emotionally charged subjects. Comprehends most nonverbal responses. Laughs at some culture-related humor. In productive skills, neither culture predominates; nevertheless, makes appropriate use of cultural references and expressions. Generally distinguishes between a formal and informal register. Discusses abstract ideas relating the foreign to the native culture. Is generally limited, however, in handling abstractions. Minor inaccuracies occur in perception of meaning and in the expression of the intended representation, but do not result in serious misunderstanding, even by a culture bearer unaccustomed to foreigners.
Near-Native Competence	Full social and professional competence. Fits behavior to audience, and the culture of the target language dominates almost entirely. Has internalized the concept that culture is relative and is always on the lookout to do the appropriate thing. Can counsel, persuade, negotiate, represent a point of view, interpret for dignitaries, describe and compare features of the two cultures. In such comparisons, can discuss geography, history, institutions, customs and behavior patterns, current events, and national policies. Perceives almost all unverbalized responses, and recognizes almost all allusions, including historical and literary commonplaces. Laughs at most culture-related humor. Controls a formal and informal register of behavior. Is inferior to the culture bearer only in background information related to the culture such as childhood experiences, detailed regional geography and past events of significance.
Native Competence	Examinee is indistinguishable from a person brought up and educated in the culture.

Provisional French Descriptions—Speaking

Novice—Low Unable to function in spoken French. Oral production is limited to occasional isolated words or expressions which have been borrowed into English or which are cognates of English words. Some examples are: *voilà, c'est la vie, cuisine, auto, table.* Essentially no communicative ability.

Novice—Mid Able to operate only in a very limited capacity within very predictable areas of need. Vocabulary is limited to that necessary to express simple elementary needs and basic courtesy formulae, such as *Bonjour, Au revoir, Comment allez-vous?, Très bien, merci, Je m'appelle...*, etc. Syntax is fragmented, verbs are used mostly in the infinitive form, and there is little or no subject-verb agreement or noun-adjective agreement. The majority of utterances consist of isolated words or short formulae. Utterances are marked and often flawed by repetition of an interlocutor's words (*Q: Quel sport préférez-vous? *A: Vous préférez le sport tennis.*) and frequent long pauses; speakers at this level cannot create original sentences or cope with the simplest situations. Pronunciation is frequently unintelligible and is strongly influenced by the first language. Can be understood only with difficulty, even by persons such as teachers who are used to dealing with non-native speakers or in interactions where the context strongly supports the utterances.

* Denotes an error characteristic of speakers at this level.

Novice—High Able to satisfy immediate needs using learned utterances. There is no consistent ability to create original sentences or cope with simple survival situations, although there are some emerging signs of spontaneity and flexibility. Can ask questions or make statements with reasonable accuracy only where this involves short memorized utterances or formulae. There is some increase in utterance length, but frequent long pauses and repetition of the interlocutor's words still occur. Most utterances are telegraphic and errors often occur when word endings and verbs are omitted or confused (e.g., *Oui. *Je parle française.*). Speech is characterized by enumeration, rather than by sentences. Vocabulary is limited to common areas, such as colors, days of the week, months of the year, names of basic objects, numbers up to 60, and names of immediate family members. There is some concept of the present tense forms of the verbs and some common irregular verbs (*aimer, parler, habiter, avoir, être, vouloir, aller),* although use is limited primarily to first person singular and first and second person plural. There is some use of articles, indicating a concept of gender, although mistakes are constant and numerous. Question words are limited to *où, quand, quel, est-ce que, pourquoi, comment* and questions are often syntactically incorrect and semantically inaccurate. May be able to pronounce sounds correctly in isolation (*r, u, p, t, k, é)* but cannot do so consistently in words or sound clusters. Errors are frequent and, in spite of repetition, may severely inhibit communication even with persons used to dealing with such learners. Unable to make one's needs known and communicate essential information in a simple survival situation.

* Denotes an error characteristic of speakers at this level.

Intermediate—Low Able to satisfy basic survival needs and minimum courtesy requirements. In areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics, can ask and answer some simple questions, can respond to and sometimes initiate simple statements, and can maintain simple face-to-face conversation. Can ask and answer questions such as *Quel âge avez-vous? Comment vous appelez-vous? Combien de frères et de soeurs avez-vous? Qu'est-ce que tu étudies?.* Can sustain a short conversation on such familiar topics as characteristics of self and family members (name, age, physical description), location and description of home, school, or workplace, and other topics that involve an exchange of simple factual information. Can make one's needs known with great difficulty in a simple survival situation, such as ordering a meal, getting a hotel room, and asking for directions. Vocabulary is inadequate to express anything beyond basic information on familiar subjects and elementary needs. Little precision in information can be conveyed and misunderstandings frequently arise because of limited vocabulary, numerous grammatical errors, and poor pronunciation and intonation. There is some control of the present tense of regular verbs and the more common irregular verbs and of gender, number, and subject-verb agreement. Can give simple answers in the negative, limited to the *ne...pas* construction. Misunderstandings frequently arise from limited vocabulary and grammar and erroneous phonology, but, with repetition, can generally be understood by native speakers in regular contact with foreigners attempting to speak French. Little precision in information conveyed owing to tentative state of grammatical development and little or no use of modifiers.

Intermediate—Mid Able to satisfy most routine travel and survival needs and some limited social demands. Can ask and answer questions on very familiar topics and in areas of immediate need. Can initiate and respond to simple statements, and can maintain simple face-to-face conversation. Can ask and answer questions and carry on a conversation on topics beyond basic survival needs or involving the exchange of basic personal information, i.e., can talk simply about autobiographical details, leisure time activities, daily schedule, and

some future plans. In a simple situation, such as ordering a meal, making purchases, and requesting a hotel room, can deal with details, such as requesting a table for two in a quiet corner, asking for an article of clothing of a particular color, getting a hotel room with a private bath for a given length of time, or inquiring about modes of payment. Can handle simple transactions at the post office, bank, drugstore, etc. Misunderstandings arise because of limited vocabulary, frequent grammatical errors, and poor pronunciation and intonation, although speakers at this level have broader vocabulary and/or greater grammatical and phonological control than speakers at Intermediate Low. Speech is often characterized by long pauses. Some grammatical accuracy in basic constructions, i.e., subject-verb agreement, noun-adjective and gender agreement for familiar vocabulary, present tense of regular verbs and common irregular verbs such as *avoir, être, aller, faire, vouloir, pouvoir, savoir, devoir, comprendre.* Can express future time using *aller* plus infinitive. May have a concept of past time, but can use only isolated past tense forms which have been learned as vocabulary items. Syntax in most simple declarative sentences is generally correct, including placement of most common adjectives. Is generally understood by persons used to dealing with foreigners.

Intermediate—High

Able to satisfy most survival needs and limited social demands. Developing flexibility in language production although fluency is still uneven. Can initiate and sustain a general conversation on factual topics beyond basic survival needs. Can give autobiographical information and discuss leisure time activities. To a lesser degree, can talk about some past activities and future plans and non-personal topics, such as activities of organizations, and descriptions of events, although ability to describe and give precise information in these areas is limited. Can provide sporadically, although not consistently, simple description and narration of present, past, or future events, although limited vocabulary range and insufficient control of grammar lead to much hesitation and inaccuracy. Extended discourse is largely a series of short, discrete utterances; cannot sustain coherent structures in longer utterances by the use of conjunctions or relative clauses. Some control of the *passé composé* and basic reflexive verbs. May be able to use some direct and indirect object pronouns, although syntax may still be faulty. Is able to use the partitive (affirmative and negative), demonstrative adjectives, most expressions of quantity, most adverbs, and some idiomatic expressions with *avoir* and *faire*. Comprehensible to native speakers used to dealing with foreigners, but still has to repeat utterances frequently to be understood by the general public.

Advanced

Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements. Can handle with confidence but not with facility most social and general conversations. Can narrate, describe, and explain in past, present, and future time. Can communicate facts—what, who, when, where, how much—and can explain points of view in an uncomplicated fashion, but cannot conjecture or coherently support an opinion. Can talk in a general way about topics of current public interest (e.g., current events, student rules and regulations), as well as personal interest (work, leisure time activities) and can give autobiographical information. Can make factual comparisons, such as college life vs. high school life. Can handle limited work requirements, needing help in handling any complications or difficulties. Can make a point forcefully and communicate needs and thoughts in a situation with a complication (e.g., calling a mechanic for help with a stalled car, explaining suspicious-looking possessions to a customs official). Has a speaking vocabulary sufficient to respond simply with some circumlocutions. Can be understood by native speakers not used to dealing with foreigners, in spite of some pronunciation difficulties. Can usually handle elementary constructions quite accurately, such as the present, *passé composé,* imperfect, future tenses of regular and irregular verbs. Has good control of the reflexive and impersonal form of verbs and of imperatives. However, use of conditional sentences is minimal and very unstable. Is able to use adjectives (including *tout,* comparative and superlative forms) correctly, and can handle object pronouns (one pronoun only), interrogative pronouns, relative pronouns, negative patterns other than *ne...pas,* most prepositions and idiomatic expressions using *depuis* with past tense and *il y a* (ago). Generally syntax is correct and word order is sustained with all pronouns, including *y* and *en.* Grasps but does not control the basic differences in usage between the *passé composé* and the imperfect (repeated or continuous vs. single action in the past, etc.) so that many mistakes are to be expected. Can link sentences together in limited discourse by using conjunctions and subordinate clauses.

Advanced Plus

Able to satisfy most work requirements and show some ability to communicate on concrete topics relating to particular interests and special fields of competence. Can narrate, describe, and explain in past, present, and future time. Can communicate facts and explain points of view in an uncomplicated fashion consistently. Shows some ability to support opinions, explain in detail, and hypothesize, although only sporadically. Can discuss topics of current interest and personal interest, and can handle routine work requirements and some complications. Can handle situations involving complications that arise in everyday life (see Advanced Level examples) but will have difficulty with unfamiliar situations (e.g., losing a contact lens in a sink drain and going to a neighbor to borrow a wrench). Normally controls general vocabulary, with

some groping still evident. Speaking performance is often uneven (strong in either grammar or vocabulary, but not both, for example). Areas of weakness in grammar can range from simple constructions such as noun-adjective, gender, and subject-verb agreement to more complex structures such as tense usage (imperfect vs. *passé composé),* and relative clauses. Only sporadic ability to use the present subjunctive, which is usually limited to impersonal expressions (*il faut que, il est important que*) and *vouloir que* constructions. Is usually able to use possessive, demonstrative, and double object pronouns correctly as well as to handle the difference between *c'est* and *il est*. Often shows remarkable fluency and ease of speech, but under tension or pressure language may break down.

Superior

Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social and professional topics. Can discuss particular interests and special fields of competence with reasonable ease. Can support opinions, hypothesize, and conjecture. May not be able to tailor language to fit various audiences or discuss highly abstract topics in depth. Vocabulary is broad enough that speaker rarely has to grope for a word; good use of circumlocution. Pronunciation my still be obviously foreign. Control of grammar is good. Good control of *passé composé* vs. imperfect; uses the present subjunctive appropriately most of the time. Partial control of *si* clauses, particularly in hypothetical statements. Correct use of the future tense with conjunctions such as *quand, dès que,* etc., and good control of negations, including *ne...ni...ni,* negation of the infinitive, and *ne...que*. Errors never interfere with understanding and rarely disturb the native speaker.

Provisional French Descriptions—Listening

Novice—Low

No practical understanding of spoken French. Understanding is limited to cognates, borrowed words, high frequency social conventions, and occasional isolated words, such as *oui, merci, café, magnifique, mademoiselle*. Essentially no ability to comprehend even short utterances.

Novice—Mid

Sufficient comprehension to understand some memorized words within predictable areas of need. Vocabulary for comprehension is limited to simple elementary needs, basic courtesy formulae, and very simple memorized material relating to everyday objects and situations, such as *Bonjour, Bonsoir, Comment-allez-vous? Où habitez-vous? Comment vous appelez-vous?* Utterances understood rarely exceed more than two or three words at a time, and ability to understand is characterized by long pauses for assimilation and by repeated requests on the listener's part for repetition, and/or a slower rate of speech. Confuses words that sound similar, such as *vingt/viens/vin, demain/deux mains, couture/culture.*

Novice—High

Sufficient comprehension to understand a number of memorized utterances in areas of immediate need. Comprehends slightly longer utterances in situations where the context aids understanding, such as at the table, in a restaurant/store, in a train/bus. Phrases recognized have for the most part been memorized: *Passez-moi du beurre. Avez-vous du pain? Le billet coûte 10 francs. Vous désirez?* Comprehends vocabulary common to daily needs. Comprehends simple questions/statements about family members, age, address, weather, time, daily activities and interests: *Etes-vous marié? Vous avez des enfants? Combien de frères et de soeurs avez-vous? Quel temps fait-il?* Misunderstandings arise from failure to perceive critical sounds or endings. Understands even tailored speech with difficulty but gets some main ideas. Often requires repetition and/or a slowed rate of speed for comprehension, even when listening to persons such as teachers who are used to speaking with non-natives.

Intermediate—Low

Sufficient comprehension to understand utterances about basic survival needs, minimum courtesy and travel requirements. In areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics, can understand non-memorized material, such as simple questions and answers, statements, and face-to-face conversations in standard French. Comprehension areas include basic needs: meals, lodging, transportation, time, simple instructions (e.g., route directions such as *Allez tout droit. Tournez à gauche. Allez plus loin.*) and routine commands (e.g., from customs officials, police, such as *Passez à la douane. Ouvrez vos valises*). Understands main ideas. Misunderstandings frequently arise from lack of vocabulary or from faulty processing of syntactic information often caused by strong interference from the native language or by the imperfect and partial acquisition of the target grammar.

Intermediate—Mid

Sufficient comprehension to understand simple conversations about some survival needs and some limited social conventions. Vocabulary permits understanding of topics beyond basic survival needs (e.g., personal history and leisure time activities), such as *Où êtes-vous né? Quel est votre passe-temps favori? Qu'aimez-vous faire le week-end?* Evidence of understanding basic constructions, e.g., subject-verb agreement, evidence that some inflection is understood. Candidate's understanding of grammatical structure

allows recognition of future and past references either by verb forms (*futur proche, futur, passé composé,* and *imparfait*) or by adverbs, adjectives, or prepositions of time (*bientôt, demain, hier, l'année dernière, avant, depuis*).

Intermediate—High

Sufficient comprehension to understand short conversations about most survival needs and limited social conventions. Increasingly able to understand topics beyond immediate survival needs, such as biographical information in which both *imparfait, passé composé, futur proche,* and *futur* are used (*J'habitais en France quand j'étais jeune. J'irai en France si j'ai assez d'argent*). Able to comprehend most sentences that feature familiar vocabulary and situations (home, office, school and daily activities; simple purchases; directions). Shows spontaneity in understanding, but speed and consistency of understanding uneven. Limited vocabulary range necessitates repetition for understanding. Understands commoner tense forms and some word order patterns, including most question forms, but miscommunication still occurs with more complex patterns. Can get the gist of conversations, but cannot sustain comprehension in longer utterances or in unfamiliar situations. Understanding of descriptions and detailed information is limited. Aware of basic cohesive features, e.g., pronouns, verb inflections, but many are unreliably understood, especially if other material intervenes. Still has to ask for utterances to be repeated.

Advanced

Sufficient comprehension to understand conversations about routine social conventions and limited school or work requirements. Able to understand face-to-face speech in standard French spoken at a normal rate, with some repetition and rewording, by a native speaker not used to dealing with foreigners. Able to get the gist of some radio broadcasts. Understands everyday topics, common personal and family news, well-known current events, and routine matters involving school or work; descriptions and narration about current, past and future events; the essential points of a discussion or speech at an elementary level on topics in special fields of interest. For example: *Est-ce que votre spécialité nécessite une formation particulière? Comment les Européens ont-ils réagi à l'installation des engins nucléaires en Europe? La classe moyenne est-elle la plus affectée par l'inflation?*

Advanced Plus

Sufficient comprehension to understand most routine social conventions, conversations on school or work requirements, and discussions on concrete topics related to particular interests and special fields of competence. Often shows remarkable ability and ease of understanding, but comprehension may break down under tension or pressure (including unfavorable listening conditions). May display weakness or deficiency due to inadequate vocabulary base or less-than-secure knowledge of grammar and syntax. May be deficient or uneven in completely comprehending conversations or discussions by educated native speakers due to a less-than-adequate knowledge of more complex syntactic structures (tense usage in simple and complex statements, passive voice constructions, relative clauses, word order, subject-object relationships). Still has some difficulty following radio broadcasts. Can sometimes detect emotional overtones. Increasing ability to understand between the lines (i.e., to make inferences).

Superior

Sufficient comprehension to understand the essentials of all speech in standard dialects, including technical discussions within a special field. Has sufficient understanding of face-to-face speech, delivered with normal clarity and speed in standard dialects on general topics and areas of special interest; understands hypothesizing and supported opinions. Has broad enough vocabulary that rarely has to ask for paraphrasing or explanation. Can follow accurately the essentials of conversations between educated native speakers, reasonably clear telephone calls, radio broadcasts, standard news items, oral reports, some oral technical reports, and public addresses on non-technical subjects. May not understand native speakers if they speak very quickly or use some slang or unfamiliar dialect. Can often detect emotional overtones. Can understand "between the lines" (i.e., make inferences).

Provisional French Descriptions—Reading

Novice—Low

No functional ability in reading French.

Novice—Mid

Sufficient understanding of written French to interpret highly contextualized words or cognates within predictable areas. Vocabulary for comprehension limited to simple elementary needs, such as names, addresses, dates, signs indicating names of streets and avenues (*rue, voie*); building names (*café, aéroport, restaurant*); short informative signs (*entrée, danger, taxi*). Material understood rarely exceeds a single phrase and comprehension requires successive rereading and checking.

Novice—High

Sufficient comprehension of written language to interpret set expressions in areas of immediate need. Can recognize all letters of printed French (but very little which is handwritten), and is familiar with French

punctuation and diacritical marks (é, è, ô, ä, ç). Where vocabulary has been mastered, can read for instructional and directional purposes standardized messages, phrases or expressions, such as some items on menus (*poulet, bifteck, salade, thé*), schedules, timetables, maps, signs indicating hours of operation, social codes (*Défense de Fumer*), and street signs (*Arrêt Fixe*). Vocabulary and grammar limited to the most common nouns, adjectives, question words, and a few verb forms. Material is read for essential information. Detail is overlooked or misunderstood.

Intermediate—Low

Sufficient comprehension to understand in printed form the simplest connected material, either authentic or specially prepared, dealing with basic survival and social needs. Able to understand both mastered material and recombinations of the mastered elements kept to the same level. Understands main ideas in material when structure and syntax parallel the native language. Can read simple messages, greetings and social amenities in dialogues and specially prepared texts and very carefully handwritten personal notes intended for a non-native reader. Can understand simple language which contains high frequency grammatical patterns in direct discourse such as NP + VP of most regular verbs in the present tense and of common irregular verbs (*avoir, être, savoir, faire, vouloir, pouvoir, comprendre*) also in the present. Has some familiarity with common idioms such as *faire* plus an adjective for the weather, *avoir* plus âge, *aller* plus adjective (for personal well-being) and *à* plus hour for time of occurrence. While the *passé composé* of the most common regular verbs might be understood, great dependence will be placed on adverbs of time for determination of tense (*demain, hier, plus tard, avant, après, à* x *heures,* etc.) and past meaning might be missed. Misunderstandings may arise when syntax is unlike that of the native language (as in inverted interrogatives especially with the *passé composé*) or when grammatical cues (of tense, number or gender) are overlooked.

Intermediate—Mid

Sufficient comprehension to understand in printed form simple discourse for informative or social purposes. In response to perceived needs, can read public announcements to determine who, what, when, where, why, and how much information about such subjects as sporting events, concerts, parades, and celebrations. Can also identify products, prices, and some conditions of sale in popular, illustrated advertising for everyday items, such as food, clothing, work or school supplies, and travel. Can comprehend a note or letter in which a writer used to dealing with non-native readers describes self and family, ages, occupations, residence, personality traits, and common preferences when high frequency or cognates and simple structures are used. Understands the general content of headlines in newspapers, such as *France-Soir,* or article titles in popular magazines, such as *Paris-Match* and *Elle,* if the content is familiar or of high interest. Understands facts and follows events in simple narration, authentic or specially prepared or edited when discourse consists of basic NP + VP + NP constructions. Can interpret negation, interrogation in various forms. Is fairly consistent in interpreting present, *futur proche (aller* + infinitive) and most *passé composé* verbs, when other time indicators (adverbial expressions) are present, but is less consistent when lexical clues are lacking. Recognizes these tenses with most regular verbs within vocabulary range and with eight to 10 most common irregulars. Understands basic noun modifiers including determiners (e.g., definite and indefinite articles, partitives, possessives, demonstratives, interrogatives) and descriptive adjectives both preceding and following, with relative ease. Has some difficulty with cohesive factors such as matching object pronouns with referents and connecting ideas expressed by relative pronouns. Uses guessing strategies to interpret vocabulary consisting of regular cognate patterns, and highly contextualized items. May have to read several times before understanding.

Intermediate—High

Sufficient comprehension to understand a simple paragraph for personal communication, information or recreational purposes. Can read with understanding invitations, social notes, personal letters and some simple business letters on familiar topics. Can identify the main ideas in two to three short paragraphs in simple articles in popular magazines (e.g., *Paris-Match, Elle, Marie-Claire*) familiar news publications (*France-Soir*) or other informational sources (e.g., publicity brochures, travel literature, and similar writing on non-technical subjects. Appreciates descriptive material on daily life and routines, biographical information. Can read for pleasure some uncomplicated authentic prose or edited prose and original poetry (e.g., Jacques Prévert) and specially prepared or edited original texts. This might include fictional narrative, description or cultural information presented in the direct discourse. Guesses at meaning from context but frequently relies on a dictionary. Can follow connected discourse with simple cohesive elements (*puis, ensuite, qui, que* and some object pronouns). Can accurately interpret detail provided by most expressions of quantity (*peu de, beaucoup de, pas de*) and most adjectives and adverbs. Can regularly and correctly interpret the use of the past, usually with the *passé composé* and occasionally with the imperfect. Common reflexive verbs are understood but most idiomatic pronominal verbs are misunderstood. Common idioms with *avoir* and *faire* are understood. Misinterpretation still occurs with more complex patterns.

Advanced	Sufficient comprehension to read simple authentic printed material or edited textual material within a familiar context. Can read uncomplicated, authentic prose on familiar subjects (sports, travel, movies, theater, food, music, current events), news items in newspapers and popular magazines, biographical information in personal letters on family topics. Reads within the limits of identifiable vocabulary some unedited texts, such as prose fiction, from carefully chosen authors, usually contemporary. Such selections might appear in Sunday newspaper supplements, other daily papers, or special anthologies on modern culture. Can usually appreciate distinctions between the *passé composé* and the *imparfait* and the future of regular and irregular verbs. Can correctly interpret compound subjects with some understanding of complex (embedded) sentences which use one object pronoun, prepositional phrases and relative pronouns. Can understand the most salient facts and supporting information but subtle nuances and inferences will remain undetected.
Advanced Plus	Sufficient comprehension to understand most factual information in non-technical prose as well as some discussions on concrete topics related to special interests. Able to read for information and description, to follow sequence of events, and to react to information read. Can separate main ideas from lesser ones and use that division to advance understanding. In major newspapers and magazines, can read international items and social and cultural news. Understanding of specialized items depends upon individual interests and background, at this level can read material in own areas of interest. Within literary fields of interest, can read non-esoteric prose, including critical articles and books. Can read signs, posters, advertisements, and public announcements. Can follow simple printed directions for cooking and other projects within areas of expertise. Guesses logically at new words by using linguistic and non-linguistic contexts and prior knowledge. Is able to comprehend most high-frequency idiomatic expressions, but will still have difficulty with figurative meanings. Can correctly interpret temporal differences as indicated by forms which differ from the native language (e.g., *depuis* and *il y a* with the present) and by the use of the *passé composé* and the *imparfait* of regular and most irregular verbs (including reflexives) as well as distinctions between the future and the *futur proche*. Will draw correct conclusions from simple *si* clauses (*si* + present + future). Although the subjunctive (with impersonals such as *il faut, il est nécessaire,* and with certain verbs of emotion, *vouloir, aimer*) is understood, as are adjectives whose meaning changes with position (*ancien professeur, professeur ancien, la semaine dernière, la dernière semaine*) the reader will still have difficulty detecting attitudes, values, and judgments. Will be sensitive to distinctions made by the use of the comparative and superlative forms and exclusions made with most negatives. Will have personal responses to written material of a literal nature (either factual information in news items or descriptive narrative in prose) but will still have difficulty with figurative meanings.
Superior	Able to read standard newspaper items addressed to the general reader, routine correspondence reports and technical material in a field of interest at a normal rate of speed (at least 220 WPM). Can gain new knowledge from material in a variety of publications on a wide range of unfamiliar topics related to fields of interest. Can interpret hypotheses, supported opinions, and documented facts, as well as figurative devices, stylistic differences, and humor. Can read most literary genres in the original: novels, essays, poetry, short stories, and most literature written for the general public. Reading ability is not subject dependent. Broad general vocabulary, knowledge of most structures, and development of strategies for logical guessing allow for successful interpretation of unfamiliar words, idioms, or structures. Verb tenses and moods have been largely mastered. Can interpret the *passé simple* as well as hypotheticals involving *si* clauses (*imparfait-conditionnel, plus-que parfait* and *conditionnel passé*) as well as the subjunctive, several passive constructions (with *être, on,* and pronominal verbs). Able to achieve overall comprehension of material, even though there may be some gaps in detail. Is generally able to comprehend facts, although misinterpretation may still occur. Can draw inferences, but may be unable to appreciate nuances or stylistics.

Provisional French Descriptions—Writing

Novice—Low	No functional ability in writing French.
Novice—Mid	No practical communicative writing skills. Able to copy isolated words and short phrases. Able to transcribe previously studied words or phrases. Able to write name, address, dates and other numbers, as well as common expressions such as those used in greetings and leave-takings.
Novice—High	Able to write simple fixed expressions and limited memorized material. Can supply information when requested on forms such as hotel reservations and travel documents. Can write names, write out numbers from 1-20, dates (days of the week, months of the year), one's own nationality as well as other common adjectives of nationality, addresses, and other simple biographic information. Can write limited learned vocabulary for common objects, short phrases, and simple lists. Can write such expressions as *Bonjour,*

Je m'appelle plus name, *Comment vas-tu? Comment allez-vous?* and other fixed social formulae. Can name some common objects; knows some common adjectives and adverbs; can use the present tense of some common *-er* verbs as well as forms of the present tense of *avoir, être,* and *aller;* can write simple negative sentences using *ne...pas* and interrogative sentences with words such as *est-ce que, où, comment, pourquoi, quand,* etc. Writes in sentences or short phrases using very basic subject-verb-object word order. Can ask and answer very simple yes-no or information questions using limited memorized or very familiar sentence patterns, with frequent misspellings and inaccuracies. Often forgets accents or uses them inappropriately. Sometimes uses infinitives for conjugated verbs. Has a concept of gender, and can produce definite and indefinite articles, though often inappropriately. Often forgets to make adjectives agree with nouns. May misplace adjectives and adverbs in sentences. Generally cannot create own sentences in the language, but uses memorized material or transformations of familiar patterns.

Intermediate—Low

Has sufficient control of the writing system to meet limited practical needs. Can write short messages, such as simple questions or notes, postcards, phone messages and the like. Can take simple notes on material dealing with very familiar topics within the scope of limited language experience. Can create statements or questions in the present tense or compound future using negative and interrogative constructions, within the scope of limited language experience. Material produced consists of recombinations of learned vocabulary and structures into simple sentences. Can express present and future time, the latter by using the present tense plus infinitive construction or the present tense and adverbs of time such as *demain, ce soir, la semaine prochaine, l'année prochaine.* For example: *J'ai un examen demain; Je vais à Paris la semaine prochaine.* Generally cannot express past time using past tenses, but may incorrectly use the present tense and an adverb of time such as *hier, hier soir, ce matin,* to convey past meaning. Uses sporadically forms such as possessive adjectives, demonstrative and interrogative adjectives, and partitive articles, but not always correctly. Vocabulary is limited to common objects and cognates, and is inadequate to express anything but elementary needs. Can express numbers from 1-100 with some misspellings. Often inserts native-language vocabulary for unknown words, and is generally not capable of circumlocution to get meaning across. Writing tends to be a loose collection of sentences or sentence fragments on very familiar topics (likes and dislikes, general routine, everyday events or situations). Makes continual errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation, but writing can be read and understood by a native reader used to dealing with foreigners. Able to produce appropriately some fundamental sociolinguistic distinctions in formal and familiar style, such as appropriate subject pronouns, titles of address and basic social formulae.

Intermediate—Mid

Sufficient control of writing system to meet some survival needs and some limited social demands. Able to compose short paragraphs or take simple notes on very familiar topics grounded in personal experience. Can discuss likes and dislikes, daily routines, give dates and times, discuss everyday events, describe immediate surroundings (home, work, school), narrate simple events, and the like. Can use correctly the present tense of most regular verbs and some common irregular verbs, such as *aller, avoir, être, faire, vouloir, pouvoir, savoir, comprendre,* etc., with occasional production errors. Can use *aller* plus infinitive to express future time. Has sporadic control of high frequency verbs in the *passé composé,* but may not attend to correct auxiliary verb or past participle agreement. Often uses *passé composé* for *imparfait* inappropriately. Can use definite, indefinite, and partitive articles, but often uses them inappropriately. Frequent errors in gender, and occasional errors in adjective agreement or placement may occur. Shows some ability to use some determiners other than articles, such as possessive adjectives or interrogative adjectives, but may make errors in appropriate choice of form. Does not tend to use object pronouns, relative constructions, or other cohesive elements of discourse, rendering the written style somewhat stilted and simplistic. Generally good control of basic constructions and inflections, such as subject-verb agreement, noun-adjective agreement, and straightforward syntactic constructions in present and future time. May make frequent errors when venturing beyond current level of linguistic competence (such as when expressing opinions or emotions, where non-memorized conditionals, subjunctives, and other advanced concepts of grammar may come into play). When resorting to a dictionary, often is unable to identify appropriate vocabulary, or uses dictionary entry in uninflected form.

Intermediate—High

Sufficient control of writing system to meet most survival needs and limited social demands. Can take notes in some detail on familiar topics (autobiographical information, preferences, daily routine, simple descriptions and narration of everyday events and situations) and respond to personal questions on such topics using elementary vocabulary and common structures. Can write simple letters, brief synopses and paraphrases, summaries of biographical data and work experience, and short compositions on familiar topics. Can create sentences and short paragraphs relating to most survival needs (food, lodging, transportation, immediate surroundings and situations) and limited social demands. Can express fairly accurately present and future time, using the *futur proche* and the present tense of most common regular and ir-

regular verbs, including reflexive verbs. Uses some common *avoir* and *faire* expressions. Can use the *passé composé* with both *avoir* and *être* auxiliaries, but does not always use it correctly or appropriately. Shows good control of elementary vocabulary and some control of basic syntactic patterns (some object pronouns, partitive and other determiners, use of *de* after negative and quantity expressions, use of negative in past tenses and *futur proche* with correct placement, etc.). Major errors still occur when expressing more complex thoughts. Dictionary usage may still yield incorrect vocabulary or forms, although can use a dictionary to advantage to express simple ideas. Generally does not use basic cohesive elements of discourse to advantage (relative constructions, object pronouns, especially *y* and *en*, connectors, and the like). Writing, though faulty, is comprehensible to native speakers used to reading French written by non-natives. Is able to express a few thoughts for which vocabulary is unknown via circumlocution, but may insert native-language equivalents for unknown words or use native-language syntactic patterns when expressing ideas beyond current level of linguistic competence.

Advanced

Able to write routine social correspondence and simple discourse of at least several paragraphs on familiar topics. Can write simple social correspondence, take notes, and write cohesive summaries, resumés, and short narratives and descriptions on factual topics. Able to write about everyday topics by using adjectives, both regular and irregular patterns (e.g., masculines ending in *-eux, -if, -al*) with mostly correct agreements and word order. Able to modify both verbs and adjectives with adverbs although word order not always correct, especially with *passé composé*. Able to narrate events using present, *passé composé,* imperfect and future forms, although the contrast between uses of the two past tenses may not be consistently accurate. Occasional use of some conditional forms to express preference and ability (i.e., *je voudrais, je pourrais...*). Has sufficient writing vocabulary to express oneself simply with some circumlocutions. Can write about a very limited number of current events or daily situations and express personal preferences and observations in some detail using basic structures. Is able to recycle new but meaningful phrases whether lexical or structural, i.e., lifts phrases appropriately, writing appears more sophisticated. When writing own thoughts, is more likely to paraphrase according to native language at times. Continues to make spelling errors where sound-symbol correspondence is radically different from English (*-ail, -eille*), where there are multiple ways of spelling a single sound (*é, ai, et...*) and with silent letters. Shows control of most elision (*l', c', m', t', qu'*) but may overgeneralize (*qui* to *qu'*) and heeds most punctuation conventions. Good control of morphology in verb tenses: correct endings for regular and irregular verbs in tenses mentioned above. Also uses correct endings for adjective agreement, and able to add *-ment* to derive adverbs from adjectives. Controls frequently used structures such as negatives, interrogatives, prepositions of location; determiners are handled accurately for form (although lapses in gender assignment occur) but there is incorrect choice as to definite, indefinite, or partitive for accurate meaning. Preposition use after verbs or adjectives is often inaccurate. Writing is understandable by a native speaker not used to reading French written by non-natives. Writer uses a limited number of cohesive devices such as a single object pronoun (direct or indirect) or *y* or *en* but does so when the repetition of the noun would be in close proximity to the original naming. Some use of *qui, que* to combine sentences and some common conjunctions are used (*parce que, quand, où,* etc.). Able to join sentences in limited discourse, but has difficulty and makes frequent errors producing complex sentences requiring tense accords (e.g., *quand* plus future, conjunctions requiring a subjunctive, *si* clauses with other than a present in the result). Paragraphs are reasonably unified and coherent.

Advanced Plus

Shows ability to write about most common topics with precision and in some detail. Can write fairly detailed resumés and summaries and take accurate notes. Can handle most informal and business correspondence. Can describe and narrate personal experiences and explain simply point of view in prose discourse by using introductory phrases [e.g., *A mon avis..., je (ne) pense (pas)...je (ne) crois (pas)...je (ne) suis (pas) sûr...*]. Can write about concrete topics relating to particular interests and special fields of competence. Normally controls general vocabulary with circumlocution or modification where necessary, e.g., may use negation plus lexical item for an unknown antonym, or modify words with *très, beaucoup de,* etc., if a more specific term is unknown, or resort to a category label for unknown components. Often shows remarkable fluency or ease of expression, but under time constraints (e.g., no opportunity to rewrite), and pressure (e.g., testing), language may be inaccurate and/or incomprehensible, especially if important lexical items are missing or if inaccurate tense usage interferes with meaning. Generally strong in either grammar or vocabulary, but not in both. Weaknesses and unevenness in one of the foregoing or in spelling result in occasional miscommunication. Areas of weakness may involve detail in the use of simple constructions: irregular plurals of nouns, adjectives; determiners (usage rather than form); prepositions (after verbs or adjectives); negatives (omitting one part; with *passé composé;* with multiple negators). Weaknesses are also observed in more complex structures: tense usage and sequence (*passé composé* vs. *imparfait;* sequence in *si* clauses; future after *quand, dès que,* etc.); passive constructions (rarely uses *on* or reflexive but tends to parallel English with consequent misuse of *être*); word order (especially with *passé composé* plus negation, inversion, adverbs,

double object pronouns, or adjectives where meaning affected by position); and relative pronouns (rarely attempts other than *qui/que*). Uses a range of tenses as time indicators including conditional, actual future (in addition to *futur proche*), and possibly *venir de* plus infinitive for immediate past. Some misuse of vocabulary still evident, especially when using a dictionary for words with multiple meanings or where related words carry various functions (*travailler/le travail, université/universitaire*), but does use a dictionary to advantage where a fairly direct bilingual translation and no intralingual ambiguity exists. Shows ability to use circumlocution. Writing is understandable to native speakers not used to reading material written by non-natives, though the style is still obviously foreign.

Superior

Able to use written French effectively in most formal and informal exchanges on practical, social, and professional topics. Can write most types of correspondence, such as memos, social and business letters (with appropriate formulaic introductions and closings), short research papers, and statements of position. Can express hypotheses and conjectures, and present arguments or points of view accurately and effectively. Can write about areas of special interest and handle topics in special fields. Has good control of a full range of structures so that time, description and narration can be used to expand upon ideas. Errors in basic structures are sporadic and not indicative of communicative control. In addition to simple tenses, can use compound tenses to show time relationships among events and to express ideas clearly and coherently, but errors are sometimes made when using complex structures, such as indefinite, relative, or demonstrative pronouns when a range of tenses is necessary within a relatively short discourse. Has lexical control of subordinate conjunctions. Usually employs compulsory subjunctives in the present tense and there is some evidence of the *passé composé* of the subjunctive mood. Generally does not use subjunctive in optional cases to suggest attitude of writer (e.g., after *Croyez-vous que...?*). Has a wide enough vocabulary to convey the message accurately, though style may be foreign. Uses dictionary with a high degree of accuracy to supplement specialized vocabulary or to improve content or style. Although sensitive to differences in formal and informal style, still may not tailor writing precisely or accurately to a variety of audiences (except for personal vs. business correspondence) or styles.

Provisional French Descriptions—Culture

Novice

Limited interaction. Behaves with considerateness. Is resourceful in nonverbal communication, but does not reliably interpret gestures or culturally-specific nonverbal behavior, such as physical contacts with greetings, proximity of speaker. Is limited in language (see listening/speaking guidelines), but may be able to manage short phrases of courtesy (*merci, enchanté, s'il vous plaît, pas de quoi, pardon, excusez-moi*) and basic titles of respect (*Monsieur, Madame, Mademoiselle*). Lacks generally the knowledge of culture patterns requisite for survival situations.

Intermediate

Survival competence. Can deal with familiar survival situations and interact with a culture bearer unaccustomed to foreigners. Is able to use conventional phrases when being introduced, such as *enchanté*, as well as proper greetings at different times of day, such as *Bonjour, monsieur; Bonsoir, madame; Salut* (limited to informal occasions with close friends), and leave-takings, *au revoir, à demain*. Shows comprehension of formal and informal terms of address (*vous* vs. *tu*). Can provide background information in a format appropriate to the culture, such as street designation before name (*Rue de la Paix*), and telephone number groupings in pairs in French provinces, i.e., 32-49-63. Is able to express wants in a culturally acceptable fashion in simple situations: *Je voudrais une chambre avec salle de bains; Un coca s'il vous plaît; Je voudrais envoyer cette lêttre aux Etats-Unis. C'est combien?* Understands need to go to specialty shops to buy foods, such as : *la boucherie, la charcuterie, la boulangerie, la poissonnerie, l'épicerie*. Can identify very common products, prices in local currency, and ask questions on conditions of promotion or sale, such as *Combien coûte cette écharpe?* Is aware of the use of the metric system and knows simple phrases, such as *Je voudrais un kilo de pommes*. Is aware of different meal schedules as well as the content of each: *petit déjeuner, dîner* (may be unable to describe the nature of differences between *déjeuner* and *dîner* due to regional or socioeconomic differences). Knows that public transportation has a different structure or organization, i.e.: *métro*, classes in subway train systems, conductor vs. driver. Is generally aware that tips are expected in restaurants but are sometimes included in the price (*service compris* vs. *service non-compris 15%*). Also generally aware that tips are expected in hotels, theatres, and other service situations. Yet may make errors as the result of misunderstanding or misapplying assumptions about the culture, such as not tipping a movie theatre usher or arriving too early for dinner.

Advanced

Limited social competence. Handles social situations successfully with a culture bearer accustomed to foreigners. Though home culture predomintes, speaker shows comprehension of general etiquette, such as avoiding taboos and never asking sensitive questions about age, salary, family affairs. Also shows com-

prehension of guest etiquette, such as complimenting hosts on food and wine, keeping both hands on the table when dining, holding the knife in the right hand, understanding that the kitchen is "off-limits" unless invited, not leaving immediately after dinner, and offering food or cigarettes to others before taking them oneself. Is aware of gifts as an expression of friendship, personal esteem, or gratitude. Knows how to accept gifts graciously. Knows how to apologize using such phrases as: *Je regrette, Excusez-moi, Pardon, Je suis désolé d'être en retard.* Can make introductions in formal and informal situations. Knows how to answer and call on the telephone: *Allô, Qui est à l'appareil? Ne quittez pas.* Knows how to ask for a third party: *Ici...Je voudrais parler avec...*, or leave a message: *Pourriez-vous lui dire que...lui a téléphoné?* Occasionally uses polite conditional to make requests (*Pourriez-vous m'indiquer...? Je voudrais un aller et retour*). Knows conversational phrases for accepting invitations (*avec plaisir*) or refusing (*Veuillez m'excuser mais...; Merci pour l'invitation, mais...*). Is able to do routine banking using vocabulary, such as *carnet de chèques, chèques de voyage, compte en banque, compte d'épargne, taux de change;* e.g., *Je voudrais déposer/toucher un chèque de...* Knows how to handle routine business at the post office (*Donnez-moi dix timbres, par avion s'il vous plaît. Je voudrais envoyer cette lettre 'recommandée.' Je voudrais acheter un mandat postal de 1.000 francs.*). Able to make more specific purchases in small or large stores and/or ask for specific help, such as *Je cherche une chemise de taille 38.* Still makes errors in the use of *vous* and *tu*. Is not competent to take part in a formal meeting or in a group where several persons are speaking informally at the same time.

Superior

Working social and professional competence. Can participate in almost all social situations and those within one vocation. Handles unfamiliar situations with ease and sensitivity, including some involving common taboos, or some that are otherwise emotionally charged. Comprehends most nonverbal responses. Laughs at some culture-related humor, such as imitation of substandard speech, plays on words, etc. In productive skills, neither culture dominates; nevertheless, makes appropriate use of cultural references and expressions, such as colloquial phrases (e.g., *Mon dieu! Sympa, zut! J'en ai marre, vachement*). Understands more colloquial and idiomatic expressions than is able to use (e.g., *avoir un mal au coeur, dormir debout, boire comme un trou, avoir une faim de loup, ras-le-bol*). Generally distinguishes between a formal and an informal register (correct use of *vous* and *tu*) and proper use of titles of respect. Discusses abstract ideas relating the foreign and native cultures and is aware cognitively of areas of difference, i.e., the importance of family ties, typical French characteristics (*art de vivre*), and some understanding of the role that French history and literature play in the everyday life and attitudes of the people. Realizes the influence of the church, religion, or lack thereof, and the anticleric attitude of many. Is aware of various social classes—*ouvrier, petit bourgeois, grand bourgeois*—and the difficulty in "changing" social classes. Can discuss current events as well as fields of personal interest and support opinions. Is generally limited, however, in handling abstractions. Would know that the French *esprit de contradiction* is a means of animating discussion and that French persons might criticize their own country, but would not accept criticism of France from foreigners. Minor inaccuracies occur in perception of meaning and in the expression of the intended representation, but do not result in serious misunderstanding, even by a culture bearer unaccustomed to foreigners.

Near-Native Competence

Fits behavior to audience, and French culture dominates almost entirely when using the language. Full social and professional competence. Has internalized the concept that culture is relative and is always on the lookout to do the appropriate thing; no longer assumes that own culture is "the way it is." Can counsel, persuade, negotiate, represent a point of view, describe and compare features of the native and target cultures. In such comparisons, can discuss geography, history, institutions, customs and behavior patterns, and current events and national policies. Perceives almost all unverbalized responses (gestures, emotional reactions) and recognizes almost all allusions, including historical (*"L'état, c'est moi."*) and literary commonplaces (*"Ce siècle avait deux ans."; "Rodrique, as-tu du coeur?"; "Il faut cultiver notre jardin."*). Laughs at most culture-related humor (*l'esprit gaulois*), such as imitation of regional or ethnic speech patterns (*l'accent méridional*) and allusions to political or comic strip figures (e.g., *Les Frustrés de Bretécher* or *Astérix*). Uses low frequency idiomatic expressions (*J'en ai ma claque; C'est pas demain la veille*); sayings (*Couper les cheveux en quatre*), or proverbs (*Vouloir, c'est pouvoir*). Controls formal and informal register. Has lived in the culture for a long time or has studied it extensively. Is inferior to the culture bearer only in background information related to the culture such as childhood experiences, detailed regional geography, and past events of significance.

Native Competence

Native competence. Examinee is indistinguishable from a person brought up and educated in the culture.

Provisional German Descriptions—Speaking

Novice—Low Unable to function in spoken German. Oral production is limited to occasional isolated words such as *ja, nein, ich Sie, Fritz* (name), *Fräulein.* Essentially no communicative ability.

Novice—Mid Able to operate only in a very limited capacity within very predictable areas of need. Vocabulary is limited to that necessary to express simple elementary needs and basic courtesy formulae such as *Guten Tag/Morgen; Auf Wiederschen; Das ist...*(name), *was ist...; Wer ist das? Danke; Bitte; Grüss Gott.* Speakers at this level cannot create original sentences or cope with the simplest situations. Pronunciation is frequently unintelligible and is strongly influenced by the first language. Can be understood only with difficulty, even by persons such as teachers who are used to dealing with non-native speakers or in interactions where the context strongly supports the utterance.

Novice—High Able to satisfy immediate needs using learned utterances. There is no consistent ability to create original sentences or cope with simple survival situations. Can ask questions or make statements with reasonable accuracy only where this involves short memorized utterances or formulae. Vocabulary is limited to common areas such as colors, days of the week, months of the year, names of basic objects, numbers, and names of immediate family members—*Vater, Mutter, Geschwister.* Grammar shows only a few parts of speech. Verbs are generally in the present tense. Errors are frequent and, in spite of repetition, may severely inhibit communication even with persons used to dealing with such learners. Unable to make one's needs known and communicate essential information in a simple survival situation.

Intermediate—Low Able to satisfy basic survival needs and minimum courtesy requirements. In areas of immediate need or in very familiar topics, can ask and answer some simple questions and respond to and sometimes initiate simple statements. Can make one's needs known with great difficulty in a simple survival situation, such as ordering a meal, getting a hotel room, and asking for directions; vocabulary is adequate to talk simply about learning the target language and other academic studies. For example: *Wieviel kostet das? Wo ist der Bahnhof? Ich möchte zu... Wieviel Uhr ist es? Ich lerne hier Deutsch; Ich studiere schon 2 Jahre; Ich habe eine Wohnung.* Awareness of gender apparent (many mistakes). Word order is random. Verbs are generally in the present tense. Some correct use of predicate adjectives and personal pronouns (*ich, wir*). No clear distinction made between polite and familiar address forms (*Sie, du*). Awareness of case system sketchy. Frequent errors in all structures. Misunderstandings frequently arise from limited vocabulary and grammar and erroneous phonology, but, with repetition, can generally be understood by native speakers in regular contact with foreigners attempting to speak German. Little precision in information conveyed owing to tentative state of grammatical development and little or no use of modifiers.

Intermediate—Mid Able to satisfy most routine travel and survival needs and some limited social demands. Can ask and answer questions on very familiar topics and in areas of immediate need. Can initiate and respond to simple statements, and can maintain simple face-to-face conversation. Can ask and answer questions and carry on a conversation on topics beyond basic survival needs or involving the exchange of personal information, i.e.; can talk simply about autogiographical information, leisure time activities, academic subjects. Can handle simple transactions at the post office, bank, drugstore, etc. Misunderstandings arise because of limited vocabulary, frequent grammatical errors, and poor pronunciation and intonation, although speakers at this level have broader vocabulary and/or greater grammatical and phonological control than speakers at Intermediate-Low. Speech is often characterized by long pauses. Some grammatical accuracy in some basic structures, i.e., subject-verb agreement, word order in simple statements (excluding adverbs) and interrogative forms, present tense of irregular verbs and imperative of separable prefix verbs (*Kommen Sie mit!*). Fluency is still strained but may be quite natural while within familiar territory. Is generally understood by persons used to dealing with foreigners.

Intermediate—High Able to satisfy most survival needs and limited social demands. Developing flexibility in language production although fluency is still uneven. Can initiate and sustain a general conversation on factual topics beyond basic survival needs. Can give autobiographical information and discuss leisure time activities. Most verbs are still in the present tense, more common past participles appear (*gegangen, gesehen, geschlafen*). Many mistakes in choice of auxiliary (**habe gegangen* with the present perfect). Past tense is attempted also with common imperfect forms (*sagte, hatte, war*). Several high-frequency separable prefix verbs appear in the indicative (*ich gehe mit*). There is inconsistent coding of proper dative and accusative cases following prepositions in singular and plural. Attempts to expand discourse which is only accurate in short sentences. Frequently gropes for words. Comprehensible to native speakers used to dealing with foreigners, but still has to repeat utterances frequently to be understood by the general public.

* Denotes an error characteristic of speakers at this level.

Advanced	Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited school and work requirements. Can handle with confidence but not with facility most social and general conversations. Can narrate, describe and explain in past, present, and future time. Can communicate facts—what, who, when, where, how much—and can explain a point of view, in an uncomplicated fashion, but cannot conjecture or coherently support an opinion. Can talk in a general way about topics of current public interest (e.g., current events, student rules and regulations), as well as personal interest (work, leisure time activities) and can give autobiographical information. Can make factual comparisons (e.g., life in a city vs. life in a rural area). Can handle work related requirements, needing help in handling any complications or difficulties. Can make a point forcefully and communicate needs and thoughts in a situation with a complication (e.g., calling a mechanic for help with a stalled car, losing traveler's checks). Has a speaking vocabulary sufficient to respond simply with some circumlocutions. Can be understood by native speakers not used to dealing with foreigners, in spite of some pronunciation difficulties. Good control of all verbs in present tense, past participles of most verbs, simple past tense of most irregular verbs, modal auxiliaries, most separable verbs and some reflexives. Double infinitives in main clauses may be attempted (mistakes are expected). Genders of high frequency words are mostly correct. Some inaccuracy in choice of prepositions as well as in distinctions between position and motion. Speaker is hesitant at times and gropes for words, uses paraphrases and fillers, uncomplicated dependent clauses (*dass, weil*) but mistakes are expected when sentences are joined in limited discourse.
Advanced Plus	Able to satisfy most school and work requirements and show some ability to communicate on concrete topics relating to particular interests and special fields of competence. Can narrate, describe, and explain in past, present, and future time. Can consistently communicate facts and explain points of view in an uncomplicated fashion. Shows some ability to support opinions, explain in detail, and hypothesize, although only sporadically. Can discuss topics of current and personal interest, and can handle most situations that arise in everyday life (see Advanced Level examples) but will have difficulty with unfamiliar situations (e.g., losing a contact lens in a sink drain and going to a neighbor to borrow a wrench). Normally controls general vocabulary with some groping still evident. Speaking performance is often uneven (e.g., strong in either grammar or vocabulary but not in both). Good control of most verbs in present and past tense and most imperative forms. Irregular control of infinitive clauses with *zu*, conditional sentences (with *würde* plus infinitive, *hätte, wäre, könnte,* and *da(r)-* and *wo(r)-* compounds). Better control of prepositions and adjective endings but mistakes will occur. Control of dependent clauses. Distinguishes between subordinating and coordinating conjunctions and how they affect word order (*denn, weil*). Good control of limited discourse, but many errors in all more complicated structures. Often shows remarkable fluency and ease of speech, but under tension or pressure language may break down.
Superior	Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and professional topics. Can discuss particular interests and special fields of competence with reasonable ease. Can support opinions, hypothesize, and conjecture. May not be able to tailor language to fit various audiences or discuss highly abstract topics in depth. Vocabulary is broad enough that speaker rarely has to grope for a word; good use of circumlocution. Pronunciation may still be obviously foreign. Control of grammar is good. Sporadic errors but no patterns of error in tenses, cases, attributive adjectives, pronouns, most verbs plus preposition, dependent clauses, subjunctive II (present and past). Control less consistent in low frequency structures such as passive plus modals, the *lassen* construction, verbs plus specific prepositions (*achten, auf, sich halten an, sich irren in*), directional adverbs (*hinauf, hinunter, herüber*), double infinitives in dependent clauses (*dass er das nicht hat machen sollen*). Varying degrees of competence in usage of idiomatic expression and slang. Errors never interfere with understanding and rarely disturb the native speaker.

Provisional German Descriptions—Listening

Novice—Low	No practical understanding of spoken German. Understanding is limited to cognates, borrowed words, high frequency social conventions, and occasional isolated words, such as *Tag, Auto, Haus, heute, morgen, schön.* Essentially no ability to comprehend even short utterances.
Novice—Mid	Sufficient comprehension to understand some memorized words within predictable areas of need. Vocabulary for comprehension is limited to simple elementary needs, basic courtesy formulae, such as *Guten Tag, Wie geht's? Auf Wiedersehen, Bis morgen, Danke,* and very simple memorized material relating to everyday objects and situations. Utterances understood rarely exceed more than two or three words at a time, and ability to understand is characterized by long pauses for assimilation and by repeated requests on the listener's part for repetition, and/or a slower rate of speech. Confuses words that sound similar, such as *fährt/Fahrt,* and pronouns, *er/ihr.*

Novice—High	Sufficient comprehension to understand a number of memorized utterances in areas of immediate need. Comprehends slightly longer utterances in situations where the context aids understanding, such as at the table, in a restaurant/store, in a train/bus. Phrases recognized have for the most part been memorized: *Die Milch/Marmelade, bitte. Die Fahrkarten, bitte.* Comprehends vocabulary common to daily needs. Comprehends simple questions/statements about family members, age, address, weather, time, daily activities and interests: *Wie viele Brüder/Schwester haben Sie? Wie alt sind sie? Wie ist das Wetter heute?* Misunderstandings arise from failure to perceive critical sounds or endings. Understands even tailored speech with difficulty but gets some main ideas. Often requires repetition and/or slowed rate of speed for comprehension, even when listening to persons such as teachers who are used to speaking with non-natives.
Intermediate—Low	Sufficient comprehension to understand utterances about basic survival needs, minimum courtesy and travel requirements. In areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics, can understand non-memorized material, such as simple questions in German. Comprehension areas include basic needs: meals, lodging, transportation, time, simple instructions (e.g., route directions, such as: *Gehen Sie geradeaus! Sie müssen links abgehen.*) and routine commands (e.g., from customs officials, police, such as: *Darf ich Ihren Pass sehen? Machen Sie die Koffer auf, bitte!*). Understands main ideas. Misunderstandings frequently arise from lack of vocabulary or from faulty processing of syntactic information often caused by strong interference from the native language or by the imperfect or partial acquisition of the target grammar (e.g., *er/ihr, er/en*).
Intermediate—Mid	Sufficient comprehension to understand simple conversations about some survival needs and some limited social conventions. Vocabulary permits understanding on topics beyond basic survival needs (e.g., personal history and leisure time activities), such as *Wo sind Sie geboren? Was tun Sie während der Freizeit? Was machen Sie gerne am Wochenende?* Evidence of understanding basic constructions, e.g., subject-verb and noun-adjective agreement; some inflection is understood. Understanding of grammatical structure allows recognition of future and past references either by verb forms, such as the constructed future (*Ich werde in die Stadt gehen*), the present perfect (*Ich bin in die Stadt gegangen*), and the simple past (*Als ich in die Stadt ging,...*), or with adverbs of time, such as *morgen, heute, gestern.*
Intermediate—High	Sufficient comprehension to understand short conversations about most survival needs and limited social conventions. Increasingly able to understand topics beyond immediate survival needs, such as biographical information (*Geburtsort, Geburtsdatum, Mädchenname der Mutter/Frau, Heimatstadt, Kindheits-/Jugenderlebnisse, Urlaubsplane/-erlebnisse/-ziele*). Able to comprehend most sentences, including those which use *dass, wenn, weil* constructions and which feature vocabulary and familiar situations (home, office, school and daily activities; simple purchases; directions). Most of the time is able to comprehend the semantic differences between utterances, such as: *Er war einen Monat in Köln; Er ist seit einem Monat in Köln; Sie sind nur eine Woche hier.* Shows spontaneity in understanding, but speed and consistency of understanding uneven. Understands more common tense forms and some word order patterns. Can get the gist of conversations, but cannot sustain comprehension in longer utterances or in unfamiliar situations. Understanding of descriptions and detailed information is limited. Aware of basic cohesive features, e.g., pronouns, verb inflections, but may be misunderstand, especially if other material intervenes. Still has to ask for utterances to be repeated.
Advanced	Sufficient comprehension to understand conversations about routine social conventions and limited school or work requirements. Able to understand face-to-face speech in standard German spoken at a normal rate, with some repetition and rewording, by a native speaker not used to dealing with foreigners. Able to get the gist of some radio broadcasts. Understands everyday topics, common personal and family news, well-known current events, and routine matters involving school or work; descriptions and narration about current, past and future events; the essential points of a discussion or speech at an elementary level on topics in special fields of interest. For example: *Wer hat die hiesige Wahl gewonnen? Wie reagierten die Deutschen auf den Bau neuer Kernkraftwerke? Zu welchem Grad leidet der Mittelstand unter der Inflation? Wurde die Kaufkraft durch die Inflation eingeschränkt?*
Advanced Plus	Sufficient comprehension to understand most routine social conventions, conversations on school or work requirements, and discussions on concrete topics related to particular interests and special fields of competence. Often shows remarkable ability and ease of understanding, but comprehension may break down under tension or pressure (including unfavorable listening conditions). May display weakness or deficiency due to inadequate vocabulary base or less than secure knowledge of grammar and syntax. May be deficient or uneven in completely comprehending conversations or discussions by educated native speakers due to a less-than-adequate knowledge of more complex syntactic structures (tense usage in simple and complex statements, passive voice and extended adjective constructions, relative clauses, word order, subject-object relationships). Still has some difficulty following radio broadcasts. Can sometimes detect emotional overtones. Increasing ability to understand "between the lines" (i.e., to make inferences).

Superior	Sufficient comprehension to understand the essentials of all speech in standard dialects, including technical discussions within a special field. Has sufficient understanding of face-to-face speech, delivered with normal clarity and speed in standard dialects, on general topics and areas of special interest; understands hypothesizing and supported opinions. Has broad enough vocabulary that rarely has to ask for paraphrasing or explanation. Can follow accurately the essentials of conversations between educated native speakers, reasonably clear telephone calls, radio broadcasts, standard news items, oral reports, some oral technical reports, and public addresses on non-technical subjects. May not understand native speakers if they speak very quickly or use some slang or unfamiliar dialect. Can often detect emotional overtones. Can understand "between the lines" (i.e., make inferences).

Provisional German Descriptions—Reading

Novice—Low	No functional ability in reading German.
Novice—Mid	Sufficient understanding of written German to interpret highly contextualized words or cognates within predictable areas. Vocabulary for comprehension limited to simple elementary needs, such as names, addresses, dates, signs indicating names of streets and avenues (*Strasse, Weg*); building names (*Hotel, Restaurant, Apotheke*); short informative signs (*Eingang, Ausgang, Rauchverbot, Taxi, Fernsprecher, Flughafen, Strassenbahn*). Material understood rarely exceeds a single phrase and comprehension requires successive rereading and checking.
Novice—High	Sufficient comprehension of written language to interpret set expressions in areas of immediate need. Can recognize all letters of German (including umlauted ones and ß). Where vocabulary has been mastered, can read for instructional and directional purposes standardized messages, phrases or expressions, such as some items on menus (*Tagessuppe, Getränke, Salat*), schedules, timetables, maps, signs indicating hours of operation, social codes (*Rauchen verboten*), and street signs (*Haltestelle*). Vocabulary and grammar limited to the most common nouns, adjectives, question words, and a few verb forms. Material is read for essential information. Detail is overlooked or misunderstood.
Intermediate—Low	Sufficient comprehension to understand in printed form the simplest connected material, either authentic or specially prepared, dealing with basic survival and social needs. Able to understand previously mastered material and recombinations of mastered elements kept to the same level. Understands main ideas in material when structure and syntax parallel the native language. Can read simple, handwritten telephone messages, personal notes, or simple letters, all of which may contain social amenities, such as simple forms of address, closure, queries about family and friends. Understands simple language with high frequency grammatical, semantic, and syntactical items such as NP + VP of most frequent regular verbs (such as *arbeiten, bleiben, glauben, tun*), irregular verbs (such as *haben, sein, wissen, werden*), and modals (*müssen, wollen, können, sollen, mögen, dürfen*) in the present tense. Familiar with idioms relating to weather, age, personal well-being, and time (such as: *Wie ist das Wetter? Er ist sechs Jahre alt; Wie geht's? Wie spät ist es?*). Adverbs of time will be used more frequently to determine the tense or time of what is being read than the actual verb tenses. Past meaning of specific verbs might be missed quite frequently. Misunderstandings may arise when syntax diverges from that of the native language (such as the verb in second position) or when grammatical cues are overlooked (such as article and adjective declensions).
Intermediate—Mid	Sufficient comprehension to understand in printed form simple discourse for informative or social purposes. In response to perceived needs, can read public announcements to determine who, what, when, where, why, and how much regarding such subjects as sporting events, concerts, parades, and celebrations. Can also identify products, prices, and some conditions of sale in popular, illustrated advertising for everyday items, such as food, clothing, work or school supplies, and travel. Can comprehend a note or letter in which a writer used to dealing with non-native readers describes self and family, ages, occupations, residence, personality traits, and common preferences when high frequency vocabulary or cognates and simple structures are used. Understands the general content of headlines in newspapers, such as *Die Welt,* or article titles in popular magazines such as *Der Spiegel,* and in *Illustrierten,* if the content is familiar or of high interest. Understands facts and follows events of simple narration in either authentic or especially prepared texts when syntax is related to simple NP + VP + NP constructions. Recognizes negation (*nein, nicht, kein*) and interrogative forms. Generally consistent in interpreting the present, the future as expressed by adverbs of time with the present tense, but recognizes only the most common strong and weak verbs in the present perfect and simple past tenses. Understands adjective declensions and the use of other determiners such as definite and indefinite articles, demonstratives, and possessives, and interrogatives. Has some difficulty matching pronouns to referents and with the use of relative pronouns. Uses guessing strategies

to interpret vocabulary consisting of regular cognate patterns, and highly contextualized items. May have to read several times before understanding.

Intermediate—High

Sufficient comprehension to understand a simple paragraph for personal communication, information, or recreational purposes. Can read with understanding invitations, social notes, personal letters, and some simple business letters on familiar topics. Can identify main ideas from topic and summary paragraphs of simple articles in popular magazines (such as fashions, gardening, furniture, homes), news publications (national, regional, and local), or other informational sources (travel and tourist brochures, guides). Appreciates descriptive material on daily life and routines, and biographical information. Can read for pleasure some uncomplicated, yet authentic prose and a limited amount of poetry (Kästner, for example). Guesses at meaning from the context of a fictional narrative description or from cultural information. Begins to rely on a dictionary or glossary to check meaning and expand vocabulary. Is able to recognize present and past tenses in a widening variety of strong and weak verbs. Recognizes, but does not fully comprehend, connected discourse with coordinating conjuntions (*aber, oder, denn, und*) and relative pronouns and other relative connectors which result in dependent word order. Also recognizes reflexive verbal constructions. Interprets expressions of quantity quite accurately. Is beginning to understand the use of particles (such as *noch, doch, gar, ja, also*) in strengthening meaning. Begins to connect sentences in the discourse and to attach advance meaning to them, but cannot sustain understanding of longer discourse on unfamiliar topics. Misinterpretation occurs with more complex patterns (such as dependent word order and most idiomatic expressions).

Advanced

Sufficient comprehension to read simple authentic printed material or edited textual material within a familiar context. Can read uncomplicated, authentic prose on familiar subjects (sports, travel, movies, theater, food, music, current events), news items in newspapers and popular magazines, biographical information in personal letters on family topics. Reads within the limits of identifiable vocabulary some unedited texts, such as prose fiction, from carefully chosen authors, usually contemporary. Such selections might appear in Sunday newspaper supplements, other daily papers, or special anthologies on modern culture. The constructed future and the subjunctive are appreciated as different from the present, simple past, and present perfect. Conditions contrary to fact are recognized with more than average difficulty. The ability to guess at compounded vocabulary, nouns in specific, within context is becoming more accurate, but still some confusion over grammar and vocabulary not yet assimilated. As far as total comprehension is concerned, is able to read facts, but cannot extend them or put them together to draw inferences.

Advanced Plus

Sufficient comprehension to understand most factual information in non-technical prose as well as some discussions on concrete topics related to special interests. Able to read for information and description, to follow sequence of events, and to react to information read. Can separate main ideas from lesser ones and use that division to advance understanding. In major newspapers and magazines, can read international items and social and cultural news. Understanding of specialized items depends upon individual interests and background, at this level can read material in own areas of interest. Within literary fields of interest, can read non-esoteric prose, including critical articles and books. Can read signs, posters, advertisements, and public announcements. Can follow simple printed directions for cooking and other projects within areas of expertise. Guesses logically at new words by using linguistic and non-linguistic contexts and prior knowledge. Is able to comprehend most high-frequency idiomatic expressions, but will still have difficulty with figurative meanings. Even though the subjunctive and conditional are better recognized and understood, the reader still has difficulty in detecting subjective attitudes, values, and judgements in what is read.

Superior

Able to read standard newspaper items addressed to the general reader, routine correspondence reports, and technical material in a field of interest at a normal rate of speed (at least 220 WPM). Can gain new knowledge from material in a variety of publications on a wide range of unfamiliar topics related to fields of interest. Can interpret hypotheses, supported opinions, and documented facts, as well as figurative devices, stylistic differences, and humor. Can read most literary genres in the original: novels, essays, poetry, short stories, and most literature written for the general public. Reading ability is not subject dependent. Broad general vocabulary, knowledge of most structures, and development of strategies for logical guessing allow for successful interpretation of unfamiliar words, idioms, or structures. Verb tenses and moods have been largely mastered. Interpretation of the subjunctive and conditional forms and passive constructions in indirect discourse of formal writing is generally complete, and with few errors. Able to achieve overall comprehension of material, even though there may be some gaps in detail. Is generally able to comprehend facts, although misinterpretation may still occur. Can draw inferences, but may be unable to appreciate nuances or stylistics.

Provisional German Descriptions—Writing

Novice—Low No functional ability in writing German.

Novice—Mid No practical communicative writing skills. Able to copy isolated words and short phrases. Able to transcribe previously studied words or phrases. Able to write name, address, dates and other numbers, as well as common expressions such as those used in greetings and leave-takings.

Novice—High Able to write simple fixed expressions and limited memorized material. Can supply information when requested on forms such as hotel reservations and travel documents. Can write names, write out numbers from 1-20, dates (days of the week, months of the year), own nationality as well as other common adjectives of nationality, addresses, and other simple biographic information. Can write limited learned vocabulary for common objects, short phrases, and simple lists. Can write such expressions as *Guten Tag! Ich heisse ..., Wie geht es Dir? Wie geht es Ihnen?* and other fixed social formulae. Can name some common objects; knows some common adjectives and adverbs; can use the present tense of some common regular verbs, such as forms of the present tense of *haben* and *sein;* can write simple negative sentences using *nicht* (but often in wrong place) and interrogative sentences with words such as *wo, wie, warum, wann,* etc. Writes in sentences or short phrases using very basic subject-verb-object word order. Can ask and answer very simple yes-no or information questions using limited memorized or very familiar sentence patterns, with frequent misspellings and inaccuracies. Usually forgets umlauts. Sometimes uses infinitives for conjugated verbs. Has a concept of gender, and can produce definite and indefinite articles, though often inappropriately. Often forgets to make adjectives agree with nouns. Generally cannot create own sentences in the language, but uses memorized material or transformations of familiar patterns.

Intermediate—Low Has sufficient control of the writing system to meet limited practical needs. Can write short messages, such as simple questions or notes, postcards, phone messages and the like. Can take simple notes on material dealing with very familiar topics within the scope of limited language experience. Can create statements or questions, in the present tense using negative and interrogative constructions, within the scope of limited language experience. Material produced consists of recombinations of learned vocabulary and structures into simple sentences. Can express present and future by using the present tense and adverbs of time such as *morgen, heute, nächste Woche, nächstes Jahr.* For example: *Ich schreibe heute eine Prüfung. Wir fahren nächste Woche nach Berlin.* Generally cannot express past time by past tenses, but may incorrectly use the present tense and an adverb of time such as *gestern, gestern abend, heute morgen* to convey past meaning. Awareness of gender apparent (many mistakes). Awareness of case system sketchy. Some correct use of predicate adjectives and personal pronouns (*ich, wir*). Vocabulary is limited to common objects and cognates, and is inadequate to express anything but elementary needs. Can express numbers from 1-100 with some misspellings. Often inserts native-language vocabulary for unknown words, and is generally not capable of circumlocution to get meaning across. Writing tends to be a loose collection of sentences or sentence fragments on very familiar topics (likes and dislikes, general routine, everyday events or situations). Makes continual errors in spelling (*ei* vs. *ie,* often omits umlauts), grammar (incorrect adjective endings, incorrect subject-verb agreement), and punctuation. Word order is random, but writing can be read and understood by a native reader used to dealing with foreigners. Able to produce appropriately some fundamental sociolinguistic distinctions in formal and familiar style, (*Herr, Frau, Fräulien*), but no clear distinction between polite and familiar address forms (*Sie, du*), such as appropriate subject pronouns, titles of address and basic social formulae.

Intermediate—Mid Sufficient control of writing system to meet some survival needs and some limited social demands. Able to compose short paragraphs or take simple notes on very familiar topics grounded in personal experiences. Can discuss likes and dislikes, daily routines, give dates and times, discuss everyday events, describe immediate surroundings (home, work, school), narrate simple events, and the like. Can use correctly the present tense of most regular verbs and some common irregular verbs, such as *haben, sein, tun, wollen, können, wissen, verstehen,* and *möchten* with occasional production errors. Can use *werden* plus infinitive to express future time. Has sporadic control of high frequency verbs in the compound past but may not attend to correct auxiliary verb or past participle agreement. Can use definite, indefinite, and partitive articles, but often uses them inappropriately, usually gets cases wrong. Frequent errors in gender-adjective agreement and cases may occur. Shows some ability to use some determiners other than articles, such as possessive adjectives or interrogative adjectives, but may make errors in appropriate choice of form. Tends not to use object pronouns, relative constructions, or their cohesive elements of discourse, rendering the written style somewhat stilted and simplistic. Generally good control of basic constructions and inflections, such as subject-verb agreement, noun-adjective agreement, and straightforward syntactic constructions in present and future time. Grammatical accuracy in some structures solidifies, e.g., word order in

simple statements (excluding adverbs) and interrogative forms, and imperative of separable prefix verbs (*Kommen Sie mit!*). May make frequent errors when venturing beyond current level of linguistic competence (such as when expressing opinions or emotions, where non-memorized conditionals, subjunctives, and other advanced concepts of grammar may come into play). When resorting to a dictionary, often is unable to identify appropriate vocabulary, or uses dictionary entry in uninflected form.

Intermediate—High

Sufficient control of writing system to meet most survival needs and limited social demands. Can take notes in some detail on familiar topics (autobiographical information, preferences, daily routine, simple descriptions and narration of everyday events and situations) and respond to personal questions on such topics using elementary vocabulary and common structures. Can write simple letters, brief synopses and paraphrases, summaries of biographical data and work experience, and short compositions on familiar topics. Can create sentences and short paragraphs relating to most survival needs (food, lodging, transportation, immediate surroundings and situations) and limited social demands. Can express fairly accurately present and future time, using the future and the present tense of most common regular and irregular verbs, including reflexive verbs. Can use the compound past with both *haben* and *sein* auxiliaries, but does not always use it correctly or appropriately. Past tense is also attempted with common simple past forms (*sagte, hatte, war*). Several high frequency separable prefix verbs appear in the indicative (*ich gehe mit*). There is inconsistent coding of proper dative and accusative cases following prepositions in singular and plural. Shows good control of elementary vocabulary and some control of basic syntactic patterns (some object pronouns, and determiners, usually use of negative in past tenses and future with correct placement, etc.). Still has problems in inverted word order and in proper placement of time, place, and manner phrases. Major errors still occur when expressing more complex thoughts. Dictionary usage may still yield incorrect vocabulary or forms, although can use a dictionary to advantage to express simple ideas. Generally does not use basic cohesive elements of discourse to advantage (relative constructions, object pronouns, connectors) and the like. Writing, though faulty, is comprehensible to native speakers used to reading German written by non-natives. Is able to express a few thoughts for which vocabulary is unknown via circumlocution, but may insert native-language equivalents for unknown words or use native-language syntactic patterns when expressing ideas beyond current level of linguistic competence.

Advanced

Able to write routine social correspondence and simple discourse of at least several paragraphs on familiar topics. Can write simple social correspondence, take notes, and write cohesive summaries, resumés, and short narratives and descriptions on factual topics. Able to write about everyday topics by using adjectives, with mostly correct gender and case. Genders of high frequency words are mostly correct. Able to narrate events using present, compound past, some simple past, and future forms, although the contrast between uses of the two past tenses may not be consistently accurate. Occasional use of some subjunctive forms to express politeness and preference. Has sufficient writing vocabulary to express oneself simply with some circumlocutions. Can write about a very limited number of current events or daily situations and express personal preferences and observations in some detail using basic structures. Is able to recycle new but meaningful phrases whether lexical or structural, i.e., lifts phrases appropriately, writing appears more sophisticated. When writing own thoughts is more likely to paraphrase according to native language at times. Controls many separable and reflexive verbs and double infinitive construction in main clauses. Good control of morphology in verb tenses; correct endings for regular and irregular verbs in tenses mentioned above. Often uses correct endings for adjectives. Controls frequently used structures such as interrogatives, negatives (but still not always correctly placed), prepositions with some rest/motion distinction but not always proper cases for the distinction, and choice of determiners (*der* vs. *ein*). Preposition use after verbs or adjectives is often inaccurate. Writing is understandable by a native speaker not used to reading German written by non-natives. Writer uses a limited number of cohesive devices such as a single object pronoun (direct or indirect). Some use of relative pronouns to combine sentences and some common conjunctions are used (*denn, weil, wann, wo,* etc.). Mistakes in subordinate clause auxiliary verb placement and double infinitive order. Able to join sentences in limited discourse, but has difficulty and makes frequent errors producing complex sentences. Paragraphs are reasonably unified and coherent.

Advanced Plus

Shows ability to write about most common topics with precision and in some detail. Can write fairly detailed resumés and summaries and take accurate notes. Can handle most informal and business correspondence. Can describe and narrate personal experiences and explain simply point of view in prose discourse by using introductory phrases (e.g., *meiner Meinung nach, ich glaube, dass..., ich bin sicher, dass...*). Can write about concrete topics relating to particular interests and special fields of competence. Normally controls general vocabulary with circumlocution or modification where necessary, e.g., may use negation plus lexical item for an unknown antonym, or modify words with *sehr, viel,* etc., if a more specific term is unknown, or resort to a category label for unknown components. Often shows remarkable fluency or ease of expression, but under time constraints (e.g., no opportunity to rewrite), and pressure (e.g., testing), language

may be inaccurate and/or incomprehensible, especially if important lexical items are missing or if inaccurate tense usage interferes with meaning. Generally strong in either grammar or vocabulary, but not in both. Weaknesses and unevenness in one of the foregoing or in spelling result in occasional miscommunication. Areas of weakness may involve detail in the use of simple constructions: irregular plurals of nouns, adjectives; determiners (usage rather than form); prepositions (after verbs or adjectives); negatives (still has problems with subtleties of placement and form, *nicht ein* vs. *kein*). Weaknesses are also observed in more complex structures: tense usage; compound past vs. simple past after *als;* avoidance where possible of *würde* in *wenn* clauses; passive constructions (rarely uses *man* or reflexive but tends to parallel English with consequent use of *sein*); statal and real passive confused; word order still a problem, sometimes with inversion, reflexive and auxiliary placement in dependent word order. Good control of simple dependent word order, subordinating and coordinating conjunctions (*denn* vs. *weil*), and relative pronouns. Irregular control of infinitive clauses with *zu*. Uses wide range of tenses as time indicators including hypothetical subjunctive (with *würde* plus infinitive, *hätte, wäre, könnte*). Uses *da(r)-* and *wo(r)-* compounds. Better control of prepositions, adjectives and case endings, but mistakes still occur. Some misuse of vocabulary still evident, especially when using dictionary for words with multiple meanings or where related words carry various functions, but does use a dictionary to advantage where a fairly direct bilingual translation and no intralingual ambiguity exists. Shows ability to use circumlocution. Writing is understandable to native speakers not used to reading material written by non-natives, though the style is still obviously foreign.

Superior

Able to use written German effectively in most formal and informal exchanges on practical, social, and professional topics. Can write most types of correspondence, such as memos, social and business letters (with appropriate formulaic introductions and closings), short research papers, and statements of position. Can express hypotheses and conjectures, and present arguments or points of view accurately and effectively. Can write about areas of special interest and handle topics in special fields. Has good control of a full range of structures so that time, description, and narration can be used to expand upon ideas. Errors in basic structures are sporadic and not indicative of communicative control. In addition to simple tenses, can use compound tenses to show time relationships among events and to express coordinate and subordinate ideas clearly and coherently. Has lexical control of subordinate conjunctions. Controls dependent word order with auxiliary and reflexive placement such as: *ich weiss, dass er hatte gestern kommen sollen* and *er sagte, dass sich der mann umzog*. Able to use quotative subjunctive (subjunctive I) consistently, as well as passives plus modals. Can use hypothetical subjunctive (subjunctive II) correctly, as well as directional adverbs (*hinauf, hinunter, herüber,* etc.) and the *lassen* construction. Has a wide enough vocabulary to convey the message accurately, though style may be foreign. Uses dictionary to a high degree of accuracy to supplement specialized vocabulary or to improve content or style. Although sensitive to differences in formal and informal style, still may not tailor writing precisely or accurately to a variety of audiences (except for personal vs. business correspondence) or styles.

Provisional German Descriptions—Culture

Novice

Limited interaction. Behaves with considerateness. Is resourceful in nonverbal communication, but does not interpret reliably gestures or culturally-specific nonverbal behavior, such as physical contacts with greetings. Is limited in language (see listening/speaking guidelines) but may be able to use short phrases of courtesy (*Danke, Danke schön, Bitte, Bitte schön, Entschuldigung, Verzeihung*) and basic titles of respect (*Herr, Frau, Fräulein*). Lacks generally the knowledge of culture patterns requisite for survival situations.

Intermediate

Survival competence. Can deal with familiar survival situations and interact with a culture bearer accustomed to foreigners. Is able to use conventional phrases when being introduced, such as *Es freut mich* or *Sehr erfreut,* as well as proper greetings at different times of day, such as *Guten Tag, Guten Abend, Grüss Gott* (in Bavaria) and leave-taking, *Auf Wiedersehen, Bis bald*. Shows comprehension of distinction between *Sie* and *du* form of address. Can provide background material in the standard form of the culture, such as a personal address (street name followed by number—*Leopoldstrasse 30*—zip code preceding name of city, zone within large city following name of city—*8000 München 23*) telephone number in many areas in groups of two: *23 23 67*. Is able to express wants in routine situations with simple phrases, such as *Ein Zimmer ohne Bad, bitte; Ein Bier, bitte; Wieviel kostete eine Postkarte nach U.S.A. per Luftpost?* and to ask directions such as *Wo ist hier die Schellingstrasse?* Understands the need to go to specialty shops such as *die Metzgerei, die Bäckerei, die Konditorei* to buy certain foods but is also aware of the offerings in supermarkets and department stores. Is aware of the use of the metric system and can function in it, using such phrases as *Ein Kilo Orangen* and *200 Gramm Leberwurst*. Is aware of different meal schedules as well as the usual content of each: breakfast, light, without either warm cooked meats or eggs other

than boiled; noon meal, the main meal of the day, heavy, but usually without a rich dessert; often, late in the afternoon, coffee and a pastry; evening meal, light, usually consisting of cold meats, salads and cheese. Knows how to use public transportation systems, whether to buy ticket from an automat, a ticket agent or a conductor. Is generally aware that small tips are expected in addition to the tip and service charge that have been added to the bill in restaurants and cafes. Is generally aware that tips are expected in other service areas such as hotels and bars. May make errors as the result of misunderstanding or misapplying assumptions about the culture, such as not tipping a gas station attendant or arriving too early for a dinner invitation.

Advanced

Limited social competence. Handles routine situations successfully with a culture bearer accustomed to foreigners. Though home culture predominates, shows comprehension of common rules of etiquette, of titles of respect, of importance of dressing according to the occasion in more formal society. Is aware of taboos and sensitive areas of the culture and avoids them. Shows comprehension of guest etiquette, such as bringing the hostess a small gift (chocolates or flowers), keeping both hands on the table while dining, holding the knife in the right hand, understanding that the kitchen is off-limits unless invited, offering food and cigarettes to others before taking them oneself. Knows how to use the phrases commonly used at table, such as *Guten Appetit;* and while drinking, such as *Zum Wohl* and *Prost*. Is aware of gifts as expression of friendship, personal esteem or gratitude. Knows appropriate gift for various occasions, knows the basic guidelines for presenting flowers. Knows how to accept gifts graciously. Knows conventional phrases for accepting invitations, such as *Sehr gern,* as well as for refusing them, such as *Vielen Dank für die Einlading, aber ich kann leider nicht kommen.* Knows how to apologize with such phrases as *Pardon; Entschuldigen Sie; bitte, vielmals,* or *Das tut mir furchtbar leid.* Can make introductions and can introduce self in both informal and formal situations. Knows how to use the telephone. Answers by giving the last name, calls by saying *Hier ist...* Knows how to ask for a third party: *Ich möchte, bitte,...sprechen.* Knows how to leave a message: *Könnten Sie, bitte,...ausrichten, dass...* Is able to shop in both large and small stores and to ask for specific items, using such expressions as *Ich hätte gern ein Sporthemd, Grösse 38; Der Schnitt gefällt mir schon, aber die Farbe nicht; Haben Sie vielleicht etwas in einer niedrigeren Preislage.* Is able to do routine banking, using such phrases as *Ich möchte, bitte, Dollarreiseschecks in DM wechseln; Wie steht der Dollar heute? Ich möchte, bitte, einzahlen; Ich möchte, bitte, abheben; Ich möchte, bitte, ein Scheck einlösen.* Knows how to handle routine business at the post office, including telephone and monetary service provided there, using such phrases as *Geben Sie mir zehn Neunziger, bitte; Einschrieben, bitte; Ich möchte ein Personengespräch mit Herrn Bianco in Italien führen; Ich möchte bitte Geld überweisen.* Is not competent to take part in a formal meeting or in a group where several persons are speaking informally at the same time.

Superior

Working social and professional competence. Can participate in almost all social situations and those within one vocation. Handles unfamiliar situations with ease and sensitivity, including some involving common taboos, or some that are otherwise emotionally charged. Comprehends most non-verbal responses. Laughs at some culture related humor, such as imitation of substandard speech, imitation of foreign accents, and references to stereotypes within the culture. In productive skills, neither culture dominates, nevertheless makes appropriate use of cultural references and expressions, such as colloquial phrases (*gottseidank, Mein Gott*) and idiomatic phrases (*Er hat sie nicht alle; Ich drücke dir die Daumen*). Understands more colloquial and idiomatic phrases than can use, such as *Gute Miene zum bösen Spiel machen* and *Der langen Rede kurzer Sinn.* Generally able to distinguish between formal and informal registers of speech, such as *Ich war wie aus den Wolken gefallen* vs. *Mir blieb die spucke weg.* Uses titles of respect correctly. Discusses abstract ideas relating to foreign and native culture and is aware of areas of difference. Has some awareness and understanding of typical German characteristics and expressions such as *Gemütlichkeit, Wanderlust, Sehnsucht. ein schönes Gesprach* vs. small talk. Has some understanding of the role that German history, literature, folklore and music play in the everyday life and attitudes of the people. Is aware of differing attitudes toward religion and the church in various parts of German-speaking areas. Is aware of various social classes and of the feelings of members of a given social class toward members of other social classes. Can discuss current events as well as fields of personal interest and can support opinions, but is generally limited in handling abstractions. Is aware that people do not generally accept criticism of their country from foreigners although they may be quite free to criticize aspects of their own country themselves. Minor inaccuracies occur in perception of meaning and in the expression of the intended representation but do not result in serious misunderstandings, even by a culture bearer unaccustomed to foreigners.

Near-Native Competence

Full social and professional competence. Has internalized the concept that culture is relative and is always on the lookout to do the appropriate thing; no longer assumes that own culture is "the way it is." Fits behavior to audience. Can council, persuade, negotiate, represent a point of view, describe and compare

features of the native and target cultures. In such comparisons, can discuss geography, history, institutions, customs and behavior patterns, current events and national policies. Perceives almost all unverbalized responses (gestures, emotional reaction) and recognizes almost all allusions, including historical (*Der alte Fritz* or *Der Lotse geht von Bord*) and literary commonplaces (*die Gretchenfrage; Es irrt der Mensch, solang er strebt*). Laughs at most culture-related humor, such as imitations of regional dialects and allusions to popular figures in public life and in the media. Uses low frequency idiomatic expressions (*Das geht auf keine Kuhhaut*), sayings (*Er säuft wie ein Bürstenbinder*) and proverbs (*Was Hänschen nicht lernt, lernt Hans nimmernmehr*). Controls formal and informal register of the language. Knows when and how to offer the *du* form of address and understands the implications of doing so. Has lived in the culture for a long time and has studied it extensively. Is inferior to the culture bearer only in background information related to the culture such as childhood experiences, detailed regional geography and past events of significance.

Native Competence — Native competence. Examinee is indistinguishable from a person raised and educated in the culture.

Provisional Spanish Descriptions—Speaking

Novice—Low Unable to function in spoken Spanish. Oral production limited to occasional isolated words or expressions which have been borrowed into English or which are cognates of English words. Some examples are: *sombrero, taco, ¡olé!* Essentially no communicative ability.

Novice—Mid Able to operate only in a very limited capacity within very predictable areas of need. Vocabulary is limited to that necessary to express simple elementary needs and basic courtesy formulae, such as *Buenos días; ¿Qué tal? Muy bien, gracias; ¿Cuánto es?* Syntax is fragmented, verbs are usually used in the infinitive form, and there is little or no subject-verb or noun-adjective agreement. The majority of utterances consist of isolated words or short formulae. Utterances are marked and often flawed by repetition of an interlocutor's words (*Q: ¿Qué comes por la mañana? *A: Comes por la mañana cereal.*) and frequent long pauses; speakers at this level cannot create original sentences or cope with the simplest situation. Pronunciation is frequently unintelligible and is strongly influenced by the first language. Can be understood only with difficulty, even by persons such as teachers who are used to dealing with non-native speakers, or in interactions where the context strongly supports the utterance.

* Denotes an error characteristic of speakers at this level.

Novice—High Able to satisfy immediate needs using learned utterances. There is no consistent ability to create original sentences or cope with simple survival situations, although there are some emerging signs of spontaneity and flexibility. Can ask questions or make statements with reasonable accuracy only where this involves short memorized utterances or formulae. There is some increase in utterance length, but frequent long pauses and repetition of the interlocutor's words still occur. Most utterances are telegraphic, and errors often occur when word endings and verbs are omitted or confused (e.g., *Sí. *Casa pequeño. *Cuatros cuartos*). Speech is characterized by enumeration, rather than by sentences. Vocabulary is limited to common areas, such as colors, days of the week, months of the year, names of basic objects, numbers up to 100, and names of immediate family members. There is some concept of the present tense forms of regular verbs, particular *-ar* verbs, and some common irregular verbs (*ser, querer, tener*) although use is limited primarily to first person singular. There is some use of articles, indicating a concept of gender, although mistakes are constant and numerous. Use of *qué* and *cómo,* and questions are often syntactically incorrect and semantically inaccurate. May be able to pronounce sounds correctly in isolation (*rr, r, ll, ción*) but cannot do so in words or groups of words. Errors are frequent and, in spite of repetition, may severely inhibit communication even with persons used to dealing with such learners. Unable to make one's needs known and communicate essential information in a simple survival situation.

* Denotes an error characteristic of speakers at this level.

Intermediate—Low Able to satisfy basic survival needs and minimum courtesy requirements. In areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics, can ask and answer simple questions, can respond to and sometimes initiate simple statements, and can maintain simple face-to-face conversation. Can ask and answer questions such as *¿Cuántos años tienes? ¿Cómo se llama usted? ¿Cuántas personas hay en tu familia?* and *¿Qué estudia usted?.* Can sustain a short conversation on such familiar topics as characteristics of self and family members (name, age, physical description), location and description of home, school, or work place, and other topics that involve an exchange of simple factual information. Can make one's needs known with great difficulty in a simple survival situation, such as ordering a meal, getting a hotel room, and asking for directions. Vocabulary is inadequate to express anything beyond basic information on familiar subjects and elementary needs. Little precision in information can be conveyed and misunderstandings frequently arise because of limited vocabulary, numerous grammatical errors, and poor pronunciation and intonation. There is some control of the present tense of regular and some common irregular verbs and of gender, number and subject-verb agreement. Misunderstandings frequently arise from limited vocabulary and grammar and erroneous phonology, but, with repetition, can generally be understood by native speakers in regular contact with foreigners attempting to speak Spanish. Little precision in information conveyed owing to tentative state of grammatical development and little or no use of modifiers.

Intermediate—Mid Able to satisfy most routine travel and survival needs and some limited social demands. Can ask and answer questions on very familiar topics and in areas of immediate need. Can initiate and respond to simple statements, and can maintain simple face-to-face conversation. Can ask and answer questions and carry on a conversation on topics beyond basic survival needs or involving the exchange of basic personal information, i.e., can talk simply about autobiographical details, leisure time activities, daily schedule, and some future plans. In a simple situation, such as ordering a meal, making purchases, and requesting a hotel room, can deal with details, such as requesting a table for two in a quiet corner, asking for an article

of clothing of a particular color, getting a hotel room with a private bath for a given length of time, or inquiring about modes of payment. Can handle simple transactions at the post office, bank, drugstore, etc. Misunderstandings arise because of limited vocabulary, frequent grammatical errors, and poor pronunciation and intonation, although speakers at this level have broader vocabulary and/or greater grammatical and phonological control than speakers at Intermediate—Low. Speech is often characterized by long pauses. Some grammatical accuracy in basic constructions, e.g., subject- verb agreement, noun-adjective and gender agreement for familiar vocabulary, present tense of regular and some irregular verbs such as *tener, poner, ser, estar, ir.* Can express future time by using *ir a* plus infinitive. May have a concept of past time, but can use only isolated past tense forms which have been learned as vocabulary items. Syntax in most simple declarative sentences is generally correct including placement of most common adjectives. Is generally understood by persons used to dealing with foreigners.

Intermediate—High

Able to satisfy most survival needs and limited social demands. Developing flexibility in language production although fluency is still uneven. Can initiate and sustain a general conversation on factual topics beyond basic survival needs. Can give autobiographical information and discuss leisure time activities. To a lesser degree, can talk about some past activities and future plans and non-personal topics, such as activities of organizations and descriptions of events, although ability to describe and give precise information in these areas is limited. Can provide sporadically, although not consistently, simple description and narration of present, past, and future events, although limited vocabulary range and insufficient control of grammar lead to much hesitation and inaccuracy. Extended discourse is largely a series of short, discrete utterances; cannot sustain coherent structures in longer utterances by the use of conjunctions or relative clauses. Has basic knowledge of the differences between *ser* and *estar* (physical description, nationality, profession vs. location, temporary health condition), although errors are frequent. Can control the present tense of most regular and the common irregular verbs, and has some control of basic reflexive verbs. May be able to use some direct and indirect object pronouns and occasionally use some knowledge of the preterite of some regular and common irregular verbs (*fui/fue, vi/vio*), but uses them only sporadically. Comprehensible to native speakers used to dealing with foreigners, but still has to repeat utterances frequently to be understood by the general public.

Advanced

Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements. Can handle with confidence but not with facility most social and general conversations. Can narrate, describe, and explain in past, present, and future time. Can communicate facts—what, who, when, where, how much—and can explain points of view, in an uncomplicated fashion but cannot conjecture or coherently support an opinion. Can talk in a general way about topics of current public interest (e.g., current events, student rules and regulations), as well as personal interest (work, leisure time activities) and can give autobiographical information. Can make factual comparisons (life in a city vs. life in a rural area, for example). Can handle limited work requirements, needing help in handling any complications or difficulties. Can make a point forcefully and communicate needs and thoughts in a situation with a complication (e.g., finding a bug in the soup in a restaurant, losing traveler's checks). Has a speaking vocabulary sufficient to respond simply with some circumlocutions. Can be understood by native speakers not used to dealing with foreigners, in spite of some pronunciation difficulties. Can usually handle elementary constructions quite accurately such as the present tense of regular and irregular verbs, and preterite and imperfect forms. Can use imperative forms and can occasionally use the subjunctive in indirect commands. Controls comparative and superlative adjectives, relative, interrogative, and simple and double object pronouns, and negatives (*nadie, nada, nunca,* etc.). Syntax, including position of adjectives, is usually correct. Grasps but does not control the basic differences in usage between the preterite and the imperfect (repeated or continuous vs. single action in the past, description vs. narration in the past) so that many mistakes are to be expected. Can link sentences together in limited discourse by using conjunctions and subordinate clauses.

Advanced Plus

Able to satisfy most work requirements and show some ability to communicate on concrete topics relating to particular interests and special fields of competence. Can narrate, describe, and explain in past, present, and future time. Can communicate facts and explain points of view in an uncomplicated fashion consistently. Shows some ability to support opinions, explain in detail, and hypothesize, although only sporadically. Can discuss topics of current interest and personal interest, and can handle routine work requirements and some complications. Can handle situations involving complications that arise in everyday life (see Advanced Level examples) but will have difficulty with unfamiliar situations (e.g., losing a contact lens in a sink drain and going to a neighbor to borrow a wrench). Normally controls general vocabulary with some groping still evident. Speaking performance is often uneven (e.g., strong in either grammar or vocabulary, but not in both). Areas of weakness in grammar can range from simple constructions such as noun-adjective, gender, and subject-verb agreement to more complex structures such as tense usage (imperfect vs. preterite) *ser* and *estar,* and relative clauses. Only sporadic ability to use the present subjunc-

tive. Can regularly use the simple future, or *ir a* plus infinitive to express the future, as well as the present progressive and past progressive tenses. Controls possessive and demonstrative adjectives, and idiomatic expressions such as *acabar de* plus infinitive, *hace* plus preterite (ago), and *hacía* plus imperfect. Uses correct word order of all pronouns (including double object pronouns) and adverbs, such as *ya, todavía, aún*. Often shows remarkable fluency and ease of speech, but under tension or pressure language may break down.

Superior — Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and professional topics. Can discuss particular interests and special fields of competence with reasonable ease. Can support opinions, hypothesize, and conjecture. May not be able to tailor language to fit various audiences or discuss highly abstract topics in depth. Vocabulary is broad enough that speaker rarely has to grope for a word; good use of circumlocution. Pronunciation may still be obviously foreign. Control of grammar is good. Good control of preterite and imperfect (about 70% of the time); uses the present subjunctive appropriately most of the time and the imperfect subjective correctly about half the time. Can use all compound tenses, and can make simple contrary-to-fact statements. *Ser* and *estar* are almost completely controlled, as are reflexives and passive usages. Errors never interfere with understanding and rarely disturb the native speaker.

Provisional Spanish Descriptions—Listening

Novice—Low — No practical understanding of spoken Spanish. Understanding is limited to cognates, borrowed words, high frequency social conventions, and occasional isolated words, such as *universidad, restaurante, gracias, taco, señor*. Essentially no ability to comprehend even short utterances.

Novice—Mid — Sufficient comprehension to understand some memorized words within predictable areas of need. Vocabulary for comprehension is limited to simple elementary needs, basic courtesy formulae and very simple memorized material relating to everyday objects and situations, such as *¿Qué tal? ¿Cómo te llamas?* or *¿Cómo se llama usted?* Utterances understood rarely exceed more than two or three words at a time, and ability to understand is characterized by long pauses for assimilation and by repeated requests on the listener's part for repetition, and/or a slower rate of speech. Confuses words that sound similar, such as *cosa/casa, hombre/hambre, pero/perro.*

Novice-High — Sufficient comprehension to understand a number of memorized utterances in areas of immediate need. Comprehends slightly longer utterances in situations where the context aids understanding, such as at the table, in a restaurant/store, in a train/bus. Phrases recognized have for the most part been memorized: *¿A qué hora sale el tren? ¿En qué le puedo servir? La mantequilla, por favor.* Comprehends vocabulary common to daily needs. Comprehends simple questions/statements about family members, age, address, weather, time, daily activities and interests: *¿Cuántos hermanos tiene usted? ¿Qué tiempo hace hoy?* Misunderstandings arise from failure to perceive critical sounds or endings. Understands even tailored speech with difficulty but gets some main ideas. Often requires repetition and/or a slowed rate of speed for comprehension, even when listening to persons such as teachers who are used to speaking with non-natives.

Intermediate—Low — Sufficient comprehension to understand utterances about basic survival needs, minimum courtesy and travel requirements. In areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics, can understand non-memorized material, such as simple questions and answers, statements, and face-to-face conversations in Spanish. Comprehension areas include basic needs: meals, lodging, transportation, time, simple instructions (e.g., route directions, such as *Siga derecho por tres kilómetros. Doble a la izquierda.*) and routine commands (e.g., from customs officials, police, such as *Pase por la aduana. Abra las maletas, por favor.*). Understands main ideas. Misunderstandings frequently arise from lack of vocabulary or from faulty processing of syntactic information often caused by strong interference from the native language or by the imperfect or partial acquisition of the target grammar.

Intermediate—Mid — Sufficient comprehension to understand simple conversations about some survival needs and some limited social conventions. Vocabulary permits understanding on topics beyond basic survival needs (e.g., personal history and leisure time activities), such as *¿Dónde nació usted? ¿Cuál es su pasatiempo favorito? ¿Qué piensa usted hacer este fin de semana?* Evidence of understanding basic constructions, e.g., subject-verb and noun-adjective agreement; some inflection is understood. Candidate's understanding of grammatical structure allows recognition of future and past references either by verb forms or by adverbs, adjectives, or prepositions of time (*pronto, mañana, ayer, el año pasado, antes, después*).

Intermediate—High — Sufficient comprehension to understand short conversations about most survival needs and limited social

conventions. Increasingly able to understand topics beyond immediate survival needs, such as biographical information in which both past and present/implied future tenses are used (*Yo vivía en el campo cuando era joven.*). Able to comprehend most sentences that feature familiar vocabulary and situations (home, office, school and daily activities; simple purchases; directions). Shows spontaneity in understanding, but speed and consistency of understanding uneven. Limited vocabulary range necessitates repetition for understanding. Understands commoner tense forms, including most question forms, but miscommunication still occurs with more complex patterns (*¿Qué te va a regalar tu novia?*). Can get the gist of conversations, but cannot sustain comprehension in longer utterances or in unfamiliar situations. Understanding of descriptions and detailed information is limited. Aware of basic cohesive features, e.g., pronouns, verb inflections, but many are unreliably understood, especially if other material intervenes (*La camisa que tiene el profesor no me parece muy bonita.*). Still has to ask for utterances to be repeated.

Advanced

Sufficient comprehension to understand conversations about routine social conventions and limited school or work requirements. Able to understand face-to-face speech in standard Spanish spoken at a normal rate, with some repetition and rewording, by a native speaker not used to dealing with foreigners. Able to get the gist of some radio broadcasts. Understands everyday topics, common personal and family news, well-known current events, and routine matters involving school or work; descriptions and narration about current, past and future events; the essential points of a discussion or speech at an elementary level on topics in special fields of interest. For example: *¿Quién ganó las últimas elecciones locales? El Secretario de Estado viajará a Chile mañana para asistir a una reunión con el presidente de ese pais; La clase media sufrirá el impacto de la inflación.*

Advanced Plus

Sufficient comprehension to understand most routine social conventions, conversations on school or work requirements, and discussions on concrete topics related to particular interests and special fields of competence. Often shows remarkable ability and ease of understanding, but comprehension may break down under tension or pressure (including unfavorable listening conditions). May display weakness or deficiency due to inadequate vocabulary base or less-than-secure knowledge of grammar and syntax. May be deficient or uneven in completely comprehending conversations or discussions by educated native speakers due to a less-than-adequate knowledge of more complex syntactic structures (tense usage in simple and complex statements, passive voice constructions, relative clauses, word order, subject-object relationships). Still has some difficulty following radio broadcasts. Can sometimes detect emotional overtones. Increasing ability to understand between the lines (i.e., to make inferences).

Superior

Sufficient comprehension to understand the essentials of all speech in standard dialects, including technical discussions within a special field. Has sufficient understanding of face-to-face speech, delivered with normal clarity and speed in standard dialects on general topics and areas of special interest; understands hypothesizing and supported opinions. Has broad enough vocabulary that rarely has to ask for paraphrasing or explanation. Can follow accurately the essentials of conversations between educated native speakers, reasonably clear telephone calls, radio broadcasts, standard news items, oral reports, some oral technical reports, and public addresses on non-technical subjects. May not understand native speakers if they speak very quickly or use some slang or unfamiliar dialect. Can often detect emotional overtones. Can understand "between the lines" (i.e., make inferences).

Provisional Spanish Descriptions—Reading

Novice—Low

No functional ability in reading Spanish.

Novice—Mid

Sufficient understanding of written Spanish to interpret highly contextualized words or cognates within predictable areas. Vocabulary for comprehension limited to simple elementary needs, such as names, addresses, dates, signs indicating names of streets and avenues; building names (*hotel, farmacia, edificio*); short informative signs (*Prohibido Fumar, Entrada* and *Salida, Se Habla Inglés*) and signs with graphic explanations (*Damas* and *Caballeros* with drawings, *Una Vía* with arrow). Material understood rarely exceeds a single phrase and comprehension requires successive rereading and checking.

Novice—High

Sufficient comprehension of written language to interpret set expressions in areas of immediate need. Can recognize all letters of printed and written Spanish, including *ñ, rr, ll,* and is familiar with Spanish punctuation and diacritical marks (¿?, ¡!, ´, ¨). Where vocabulary has been mastered, can read for instructional and directional purposes standardized messages, phrases or expressions, such as some items on menus (*pollo, bistec, ensalada, té*), schedules, timetables, maps, signs indicating hours of operation (*Abierto de 9 a 12, Cerrado de 12 a 2*), social codes (*Mantenga Limpia Su Ciudad*), and street signs (*Alto, Ferrocarril,*

Hombres Trabajando). Vocabulary and grammar limited to the most common nouns, adjectives, question words, and a few verb forms. Material is read for essential information. Detail is overlooked or misunderstood.

Intermediate—Low

Sufficient comprehension to understand in printed form the simplest connected material, either authentic or specially prepared, dealing with basic survival or social needs. Able to understand both mastered material and recombinations of the mastered elements kept to the same level. Understands main ideas in material when structure and syntax parallel the native language. Can read brief messages in simple language, either typewritten or in very clear handwriting, such as telephone messages and personal notes about topics familiar to the reader. Recognizes written greetings and other social amenities common to notes and personal letters, such as greetings extended to the family, queries about the well-being of the addressee and family or friends, and expressions used in closings. Can interpret short, simple narratives containing the highest-frequency vocabulary and learned grammatical patterns. These include common verbs in the present tense, *hay/no hay*, many descriptive adjectives, common adverbs of time and manner, and memorized expressions referring to time, weather, etc. Misunderstandings arise often, when syntax diverges from that of the native language, when grammatical cues are overlooked or misinterpreted (e.g., tense and agreement markers or object pronouns), or when the style of handwriting is unfamiliar to the reader.

Intermediate—Mid

Sufficient comprehension to understand in printed form simple discourse for informative or social purposes. In response to perceived needs, can read public announcements to determine who, what, when, where, why, and how much information about such subjects as sporting events, concerts, parades, and celebrations. Can also identify products, prices, and some conditions of sale in popular, illustrated advertising for everyday items, such as food, clothing, work or school supplies, and travel. Can comprehend a note or letter in which a writer used to dealing with non-native readers describes self and family, ages, occupations, residence, personality traits, and common preferences when high frequency vocabulary or cognates are used. Understands general content of headlines in newspapers or article titles in popular magazines, such as *Semana, Hola,* and *Cambio 16,* if the content is familiar or of high interest. Understands facts and follows events in simple narration, authentic or specially prepared or edited when discourse consists of basic NP + VP + NP constructions. Can interpret negation, interrogation in various forms. Is fairly consistent in interpreting present time with present-tense verbs, future with *ir a* + infinitive, and past with basic regular and the eight to 10 most common irregular preterite-tense verbs, but still relies greatly on adverbs (*ayer, antes, después*) to verify relations of events in time. Has some difficulty with the cohesive factors in discourse, such as matching pronouns with referents and connecting ideas brought together by relative pronouns. Uses guessing strategies to interpret vocabulary consisting of regular cognate patterns, and highly contextualized items. May have to read several times before understanding.

Intermediate—High

Sufficient comprehension to understand a simple paragraph for personal communication, information or recreational purposes. Can read with understanding invitations, social notes, personal letters and some simple business letters on familiar topics. Can identify the main ideas in two to three short paragraphs of simple, non-technical narrative. Can identify main ideas from short items of general interest on familiar topics in popular magazines, such as *Semana, Hola, Activa,* in current familiar news items from major newspapers, and in other informational sources such as travel and publicity brochures. Can read for pleasure some uncomplicated authentic or edited prose and poetry and specially edited texts; material on Hispanic culture and civilization designed for the reader's linguistic level. Guesses at meaning when the context is clear, but relies heavily on a bilingual dictionary. Begins to use future and past (particularly preterite) verb endings to interpret time relations, and can recognize some cohesive factors such as object pronouns and simple clause connectors (*cuando, porque*). Understands statements and questions about likes and dislikes, although may be confused about tense or subject-object. Begins to relate sentences in the discourse to advance meaning, but cannot sustain understanding of longer discourse on unfamiliar topics. Misinterpretation still occurs with more complex patterns (longer sentences with subordinate constructions; reflexives and object pronouns; and most idiomatic expressions).

Advanced

Sufficient comprehension to read simple authentic printed material or edited textual material within a familiar context. Can read uncomplicated, authentic prose on familiar subjects (sports, travel, movies, theater, food, music, current events), news items in newspapers and popular magazines, biographical information in personal letters on family topics. Reads within the limits of identifiable vocabulary some unedited texts, such as prose fiction, from carefully chosen authors, usually contemporary. Such selections might appear in Sunday newspaper supplements, other daily papers, or special anthologies on modern culture. Sources include most major newspapers from Hispanic cities, popular magazines and news magazines published for the general public (*Visión, Tiempo*). Misunderstandings may stem from lack of comprehension of the cultural or situational context, or from misinterpretation of grammatical clues that have been only partial-

ly assimilated to this point. Has some understanding of past time relations involving preterite vs. imperfect, but typically can recognize only limited present subjunctive meanings. Can follow essential points of written discussion at level of main ideas and some supporting ones with topics in a field of interest or where background exists, although will tend not to be able to draw inferences.

Advanced Plus

Sufficient comprehension to understand most factual information in non-technical prose as well as some discussions on concrete topics related to special interests. Able to read for information and description, to follow sequence of events, and to react to information read. Can separate main ideas from lesser ones and use that division to advance understanding. In major newspapers and magazines, can read international items and social and cultural news. Understanding of specialized items depends upon individual interests and background, at this level can read material in own areas of interest. Within literary fields of interest, can read non-esoteric prose, including critical articles and books. Can read signs, posters, advertisements, and public announcements. Can follow simple printed directions for cooking and other projects within areas of expertise. Guesses logically at new words by using linguistic and non-linguistic contexts and prior knowledge. Is able to comprehend most high-frequency idiomatic expressions, but will still have difficulty with figurative meanings. Can correctly interpret most indicators of time relations, including indicative verb endings, adverbial expressions (*antes de que, después de que, luego*) and expressions with *hacer*. Has a good understanding of meanings expressed by the present subjunctive, and is able to interpret imperfect subjunctive part of the time (e.g., with impersonal expressions such as *era necesario que,* or expressions of volition or emotion such as *quisiera que* or *sentía que*). May react personally to the material but does not yet detect subjective attitudes, values, or judgments reflected in the style of writing.

Superior

Able to read standard newspaper items addressed to the general reader, routine correspondence,reports and technical material in a field of interest at a normal rate of speed (at least 220 WPM). Can gain new knowledge from material in a variety of publications on a wide range of unfamiliar topics related to fields of interest. Can interpret hypotheses, supported opinions, and documented facts, as well as figurative devices, stylistic differences, and humor. Can read most literary genres in the original: novels, essays, poetry, short stories, and most literature written for the general public. Reading ability is not subject dependent. Broad general vocabulary, knowledge of most structures, and development of strategies for logical guessing allow for successful interpretation of unfamiliar words, idioms, or structures. Verb tenses and moods have been largely mastered, including irregular uses of past subjunctive and conditional. Able to achieve overall comprehension of material, even though there may be some gaps in detail. Is generally able to comprehend facts, although misinterpretation may still occur. Can draw inferences, but may be unable to appreciate nuances or stylistics.

Provisional Spanish Descriptions—Writing

Novice—Low

No functional ability in writing Spanish.

Novice—Mid

No practical communicative writing skills. Able to copy isolated words and short phrases. Able to transcribe previously studied words or phrases. Able to write name, address, dates and other numbers, as well as common expressions such as those used in greetings and leave-takings.

Novice—High

Able to write simple fixed expressions and limited memorized material. Can supply information when requested on forms such as hotel registers and travel documents. Can write names, write out numbers from 1-20, dates (days of the week, months of the year), own nationality as well as other common adjectives of nationality, addresses, and other simple biographical information. Can write limited learned vocabulary for common objects, short phrases, and simple lists. Can write such expressions as *Buenos días; Yo me llamo* plus name; *¿Cómo está usted?* and other fixed social formulae. Can name some common objects; knows some common adjectives and adverbs; can use the present tense of some common verbs, and can write interrogative sentences with words such as *dónde, cómo, por qué, cuando*. Can write all the letters and unique punctuation and diacritical marks in Spanish. Able to write simple, memorized material, with frequent misspellings. Some sound/letter combinations transfer negatively, such as **qua-* or **quo-* for *cua-* or *cuo-*, and consonants are often doubled or miswritten especially in cognate words such as **classe, *natión*. Accent marks are frequently missed, especially when one word of a pair has an accent mark and the other one does not, e.g., *lección/lecciones, joven/jóvenes*. Sometimes uses infinitives for conjugated verbs. Has a concept of gender, and can produce definite and indefinite articles, though often inappropriately. Often forgets to make adjectives agree with nouns. Generally cannot create own sentences in the language, but uses memorized material or transformations of familiar patterns.

*Denotes an error characteristic of speakers at this level.

Intermediate—Low

Has sufficient control of the writing system to meet limited practical needs. Can write short messages, such as simple questions or notes, postcards, phone messages, and the like. Can take simple notes on material dealing with very familiar topics within the scope of limited language experience. Material produced consists of recombinations of learned vocabulary and structures into simple sentences. Can express present and future by using the present tense and adverbs of time such as *mañana, esta noche, la semana próxima, el año próximo.* For example: *Tengo un examen mañana; Yo voy a Caracas la semana próxima.* Generally cannot express past time by past tenses, but may incorrectly use the present tense and an adverb of time such as *ayer, la noche pasada, esta mañana* to convey past meaning. Uses sporadically forms such as possessive adjectives, demonstrative and interrogative adjectives, and partitive articles, but not always correctly. Vocabulary is limited to common objects and cognates, and is inadequate to express anything but elementary needs. Can express numbers from 1-100 with some misspellings. Often inserts native-language vocabulary for unknown words, and is generally not capable of circumlocution to get meaning across. Writing tends to be a loose collection of sentences or sentence fragments on very familiar topics (likes and dislikes, general routine, everyday events or situations). Makes continual errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation, but writing can be read and understood by a native reader used to dealing with foreigners. Able to produce appropriately some fundamental sociolinguistic distinctions in formal and familiar style, such as appropriate subject pronouns, titles of address and basic social formulae.

Intermediate—Mid

Sufficient control of writing system to meet some survival needs and some limited social demands. Able to compose short paragraphs or take notes on familiar topics grounded in personal experience. Can discuss likes and dislikes, daily routine, everyday events, and the like. Can use correctly the present tense of most regular verbs and some iregular verbs. Can use *ir a* plus infinitive to express future time. Can express past time using content words and time expressions, with sporadically accurate verbs. Generally good control of basic constructions and inflections, such as subject-verb agreement, and straightforward syntactic constructions in present or future time, but may make errors where related forms are separated in a sentence, e.g., **Mi mamá no es muy alto.* May make frequent errors when venturing beyond current level of linguistic competence (such as when expressing opinions or emotions, where non-memorized conditionals, subjunctives, and other advanced concepts of grammar may come into play.) When resorting to a dictionary, often is unable to identify appropriate vocabulary, or uses dictionary entry in uninflected form.

*Denotes an error characteristic of speakers at this level.

Intermediate—High

Sufficient control of writing system to meet most survival needs and limited social demands. Can take notes in some detail on familiar topics (autobiographical information, preferences, daily routine, simple descriptions and narration of everyday events and situations) and respond to personal questions using elementary vocabulary and common structures. Can write simple letters, brief synopses and paraphrases, summaries of biographical data and work experience, and short compositions on familiar topics. Can create sentences and short paragraphs relating to most survival needs (food, lodging, transportation, immediate surroundings and situations) and limited social demands. Can express fairly accurately present and future time. Produces some past verb forms, but not always accurately or with correct usage. Shows good control of elementary vocabulary and some control of basic syntactic patterns, but major errors still occur when expressing more complex thoughts. Dictionary usage may still yield incorrect vocabulary to express simple ideas. Generally does not use basic cohesive elements of discourse to advantage (relative constructions, pronouns, connectors, and the like). Writing, though faulty, is comprehensible to native speakers used to reading Spanish written by non-natives. Is able to express a few thoughts for which vocabulary is unknown via circumlocution, but may insert native-language syntactic patterns when expressing ideas beyond current level of linguistic competence.

Advanced

Able to write routine social correspondence and simple discourse of at least several paragraphs on familiar topics. Can write simple social correspondence, take notes and write cohesive summaries, resumés, and short narratives and descriptions on factual topics in the past, present, and future time. Able to write about everyday topics using both description and narration. Has sufficient vocabulary to write simple statements with some circumlocution. Can write about a limited number of current events of daily situations and can express personal preferences and observations in some detail using basic structures. Is able to recycle new but meaningful phrases whether lexical or structural, i.e., lifts phrases appropriately, writing appears more sophisticated. When writing own thoughts, is more likely to paraphrase according to native language at times. Still makes errors in spelling and accent marks, but controls the most common formats and punctuation conventions. Good control of noun, adjective, and verb morphology, and of the most frequently used syntactic structures. Elementary constructions are usually handled quite accurately, and

writing is understandable to a native speaker not used to reading Spanish written by non-natives. Uses a limited number of cohesive devices such as direct-object pronouns, and can delete redundant words with good accuracy. Has difficulty with indirect object constructions, however, typically treating the *a*-phrase as obligatory and the indirect-object pronoun as optional (**Siempre doy regalos a mi novio.*) Uses verbs like *gustar, importar, faltar,* and *quedar* in certain fixed formulae, but without confidence or flexibility, and frequently follows English patterns: **Yo falto veinte dolares.* Able to join sentences in limited discourse, but has difficulty and makes frequent errors in producing complex sentences. Paragraphs are reasonably unified and coherent.

*Denotes an error characteristic of speakers at this level.

Advanced Plus

Shows ability to write about most common topics with some precision and in some detail. Can write fairly detailed resumes and summaries and take accurate notes. Can write most social and informal business correspondence. Can describe and narrate personal experiences and explain simply points of view in prose discourse using simple and compound verb tenses. Can write about concrete topics relating to particular interests and special fields of competence. Normally controls general vocabulary with some circumlocution. Often shows remarkable fluency and ease of expression, but under time constraints (e.g., no opportunity to rewrite), and pressure (e.g., testing), language may be inaccurate and/or incomprehensible. Generally strong in either grammar or vocabulary, but rarely in both. Weaknesses and unevenness in one of the foregoing or in spelling result in occasional miscommunication. Areas of weakness range sporadically from simple constructions, such as articles, prepositions, negatives and agreement, to more complex structures, such as tense usage (especially preterite and imperfect), passive or impersonal constructions, word order, relative clauses, and basic subjunctive constructions. Preterite vs. imperfect errors are especially likely with *haber* and *ser,* and when an arguably "ongoing" or "habitual" activity is circumscribed in time: *Estuvimos bailando toda la noche; Fui a la playa todos los días durante el mes que estuvimos allí.* Some misuse of vocabulary still evident, especially when using dictionary for words with multiple meanings or where related words carry various functions, but does use a dictionary to advantage where a fairly direct bilingual translation and no intralingual ambiguity exist. Shows ability to use circumlocution. Writing is understandable to native speakers not used to reading material written by non-natives, though the style is still obviously foreign.

Superior

Able to use written Spanish effectively in most formal and informal exchanges on practical, social, and professional topics. Can write most types of correspondence, such as memos, social and business letters (with appropriate formulaic introductions and closings), short research papers, and statements of position. Can express hypotheses and conjectures, and present arguments or points of view accurately and effectively. Can write about areas of special interest and handle topics in special fields. Has good control of a full range of structures so that time, description and narration can be used to expand upon ideas. Errors in basic structures are sporadic and not indicative of communicative control. In addition to simple tenses, can use compound tenses to show time relationships among events to express ideas clearly and coherently, but errors are sometimes made when using complex structures, such as indefinite, relative, or demonstrative pronouns when a range of tenses is necessary within a relatively short discourse. These errors are occasional and rarely disturb the native speaker. Has a wide enough vocabulary to convey the message accurately, though style may be foreign. Uses dictionary with a high degree of accuracy to supplement specialized vocabulary or to improve content or style. Although sensitive to differences in formal and informal style, still may not tailor writing precisely or accurately to a variety of audiences (except for personal vs. business correspondence) or styles.

Provisional Spanish Descriptions—Culture

Novice

Limited interaction. Behaves with considerateness. Is resourceful in nonverbal communication, but does not reliably interpret gestures or culturally specific nonverbal behavior, such as physical contacts with greetings, proximity of speaker. Is limited in language (see listening/speaking guidelines), but may be able to manage short phrases of courtesy (*gracias, con mucho gusto, de nada*) and basic titles of respect (*señor, señora, señorita*). Lacks generally the knowledge of culture patterns requisite for survival situations.

Intermediate

Survival competence. Can deal with familiar survival situations and interact with a culture bearer accustomed to foreigners. Is able to use conventional phrases when being introduced, such as *mucho gusto, el gusto es mío* as well as proper greetings at different times of day or night: *Buenas tardes* (more extensive period of time, until sunset); *Buenas noches* (both greeting and leave-taking); *Hola* (limited to informal occasions among friends). Can provide background information, such as personal address (street followed by number: *Calle Norte #30*), and telephone number (grouping in pairs: 32-49-63). Is able to express wants in simple

situations: *Quiero un cuarto con baño; Quiero una coca-cola, por favor; Quiero un sello* (or *una estampilla*) *para México.* Is able to ask directions: *¿Dónde queda* (or *está*) *el banco? (hotel, correo, parque, estación de policía,* etc.). Understands the need to go to different specialty shops to buy foods: *carne* in the *carnicería, pan* at the *panadería, pescado* at the *pescadería, dulces* at the *dulcería, frutas* at the *frutería,* etc. Is aware of the use of the metric system and knows simple phrases, such as *Quiero cien gramas de queso.* Is aware of different meal schedules as well as the content of each meal. Breakfast: light, consisting of bread, milk and coffee in most cases; Lunch: heavy; Dinner: generally very late. Knows that public transportation has different structure or organization according to country, such as buses with a *conductor* (driver) and a *cobrador* (ticket collector). Comprehends responses: *El banco está a dos cuadras; El correo queda a la izquierda del Hotel Nacional; Cuesta tres pesos; El hotel está lleno; No tenemos habitaciones (cuartos) disponibles,* etc. Is generally aware that tips are expected in restaurants, hotels, theaters, and other service situations. Yet may make errors as the result of misunderstanding or misapplying assumptions about the culture, such as not tipping a gas station attendant or arriving too early for dinner.

Advanced

Limited social competence. Handles routine situations successfully with a culture bearer accustomed to foreigners. Though home culture predominates, shows comprehension of common rules of etiquette, such as use of *tú* and *usted* and titles of respect, the importance of dressing according to the occasion in a more formal society, taboos and never asking private questions about age, salary and family affairs. Also shows comprehension of guest etiquette, such as complimenting hosts on food and wine, keeping both hands on the table when dining, holding the knife in the right hand, understanding that the kitchen is "off-limits" unless invited, not leaving immediately after dinner, and offering food or cigarettes to others before taking them oneself. Knows uses of *con permiso* vs. *perdón* as well as uses of *gusta* and *buen provecho* as common phrases of courtesy. Can make polite requests using commands or first person of *querer* with polite intonation and/or followed by *por favor* for requests. *Deme un formulario, por favor. Quiero un pasaje de ida y vuelta.* Knows conventional phrases for accepting invitations (*Encantado(a), accepto con mucho gusto, es un placer para mí cenar con su familia)* or refusing them (*gracias,* or *muchas gracias, se lo agradezco mucho, pero tengo otro compromiso* or *tengo que estudiar/trabajar,* etc.). Is aware of the use of gifts as an expression of friendship, personal esteem or gratitude. Knows how to accept gifts graciously. Knows how to apologize, using phrases such as: *lo siento mucho, no fue mi intención molestarle, perdóneme,* or *usted perdone, lamento lo sucedido,* etc. Is aware of Hispanics' reluctance to apologize. Can make introductions in formal and informal situations. Knows how to answer the telephone: *diga, bueno, aló, sí. Juan no está; ¿quiere dejarle algún recado? ¿Quién lo llama, por favor?* Knows how to place a call and ask for a third party: *Habla Jack Smith, ¿está Pedro?* or *Buenas tardes, ¿puedo hablar con Pedro Fernández?* or leave a message: *Hágame el favor de decirle que Jack Smith lo llamó.* Is able to do routine banking: *Deseo abrir una cuenta corriente* (or *de ahorros*); *Quiero depositar $1,300; Necesito comprar 20 cheques de viajero de $100 (cada uno); Necesito cambiar este cheque personal; Quiero sacar $60 de mi cuenta de ahorros; Quiero enviar un giro bancario al Perú.* Knows how to handle routine business at the post office: *Deme 10 sellos aéreos, por favor; Deseo enviar un giro postal de $50 a México; ¿Cuánto es el franqueo de una tarjeta postal a Bolivia?* Is able to make purchases in a small or large store: *¿Dónde queda el departmento de ropa interior (de caballeros, de niños, etc.)? Deseo una camisa deportiva de rayón, talla 34* or *talla mediana; ¿Cuál es el precio? ¿Cuánto cuesta? ¿Qué precio tiene? ¿Está rebajado hoy?* Can identify products, prices (in local currency), and conditions of promotional sales. Understands that bargaining is limited to small markets and street vendors and knows how to bargain: *Es muy caro...le ofrezco 40 pesos; No puedo pagarle más de 300 pesetas.* Still makes errors in the use of *tú* and *usted.* Is not competent to take part in a formal meeting or in a group where several persons are speaking informally at the same time.

Superior

Working social and professional competence. Can participate in almost all social situations and those within one vocation. Handles unfamiliar situations with ease and sensitivity, including some involving common taboos, or some that are otherwise emotionally charged. Comprehends most nonverbal responses. Laughs at some culture-related humor, such as imitation of substandard speech, plays on words, etc. In productive skills, neither culture predominates; nevertheless, makes appropriate use of cultural references and expressions, such as colloquial phrases (*¡Dios te libre!*), idiomatic phrases (*en puntillas*), or sayings (*alegre como unas Pascuas; loco como una cabra*). Generally distinguishes between formal and informal register (i.e., correct use of formal *usted* vs. informal *tú*) and proper use of titles of respect. Discusses abstract ideas relating the foreign and native cultures and is aware cognitively of areas of difference, i.e., the importance of family ties (extended family), the attitude toward animals, the influence of the military in political affairs, the influence of the church vs. the long tradition of anticlericalism among men, especially in Latin America. Can discuss current events as well as fields of personal interest and support opinions. Is generally limited, however, in handling abstractions. Would know that Hispanic persons might criticize their own country, but would not accept such criticism from foreigners.

Near-Native Competence	Full social and professional competence. Has internalized the concept that culture is relative and is always on the lookout to do the appropriate thing; no longer assumes that own culture is "the way it is." Fits behavior to audience, and Hispanic culture dominates almost entirely when using the language. Can counsel, persuade, negotiate, represent a point of view, describe and compare features of the native and target cultures. In such comparisons, can discuss geography, history, institutions, customs and behavior patterns, current events and national policies. Perceives almost all unverbalized responses (gestures, emotional reactions) and recognizes almost all allusions, including historical (*Es un Trujillo más en el Caribe.*) and literary commonplaces pertaining to a particular country (*Nos encontramos con otro Tirano Banderas.*). Laughs at most culture-related humor, such as imitation of regional or ethnic speech patterns and allusions to political or comic strip figures. Uses low frequency idiomatic expressions (*apañados estamos*), sayings (*más pobre que una rata de sacristía*) or proverbs (*La gota de agua horada la piedra.*). Controls formal and informal register. Has lived in the culture for a long time or has studied it extensively. Is inferior to the culture bearer only in background information related to the culture such as childhood experiences, detailed regional geography and past events of significance.
Native Competence	Native competence. Examinee is indistinguishable from a person brought up and educated in the culture.

american council on the teaching of foreign languages, inc.

ACTFL

385 WARBURTON AVENUE, HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON, NY 10706 914/478-2011

PROVISIONAL PROFICIENCY GUIDELINES QUESTIONNAIRE

Name _____

Institution _____

Position _____

Business address/telephone

_____

_____

_____

_____

( ) _____

What language(s) do you teach?

French _____ German _____ Spanish _____ Other _____

Please respond to this questionnaire on the basis of the guidelines for the language(s) which you teach. If you teach a language other than French, German, or Spanish, use the Generic Guidelines as the basis for your response.

Feel free to continue your response to any of the questions on the last page.

1. What language(s) and level(s) do you teach?

2. Which section(s) of the proficiency guidelines correspond (a) to the material covered in the course(s) you teach; and (b) to the textbooks you use?

3. How do the proficiency guidelines modalities of speaking, listening, reading, writing, and culture fit with what is emphasized in your course curricula?

4. How does the sequencing of the course(s) you teach correspond to the proficiency guidelines?

5. Do the five skill area strands taken together make up a coherent set of language proficiency guidelines?

6. Do any of the strands seem out-of-step with the others?

7. Do any of the strands seem less useful than the others?

8. Does anything in particular seem to be missing from the proficiency guidelines?

9. How do you think these guidelines would be accepted by your department?

10. Please feel free to make further comments about the guidelines, including any additional uses for the guidelines that you may foresee.

Title VI, HEA, Sec. 605
G00-81-03203

FINAL REPORT

A DESIGN FOR MEASURING AND COMMUNICATING FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Submitted by

American Council on the Teaching
of Foreign Languages
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Project Director
385 Warburton Avenue
Hastings-on-Hudson, NY 10706

The objectives of this project, "A Design for Measuring and Communicating Foreign Language Proficiency," were three:

1. To create a set of generic proficiency goals in common for all languages in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and culture;

2. To create language-specific proficiency goals--in French, German, and Spanish--in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and culture;

3. To field test both the generic and the language-specific proficiency goals with potential users (college and university professors) to determine whether the goals are useful to foreign language educators.

The complete set of generic and language-specific proficiency guidelines was first made available to the profession on a large scale at the ACTFL Annual Meeting in New York in November 1982. Since that time, nearly 5,000 copies of the Proficiency Guidelines have been requested by foreign language professionals throughout the country.

The Guidelines writers, cited on the introductory page of the booklet, comprise a unique body of experts drawn from academia, government, and business. This group, as well as an additional group of professionals trained in ACTFL/ETS Oral Proficiency Tester and Trainer Workshops, has tirelessly promoted this project at professional meetings and institutions in all parts of the United States, and the response has been extremely positive.

In addition, ACTFL has sought more substantive feedback via a detailed questionnaire inviting comments based on systematic field testing (a copy of the questionnaire is inserted as Appendix B). The responses to the questionnaire have been very encouraging.

Of the respondents who field tested the Guidelines, the vast majority reported that the four skill area statements collectively made up a coherent coordinated set of language proficiency guidelines.

The area of greatest concern has been the culture guidelines. It is in this area that the ACTFL project breaks new ground. The government language schools have never attempted to quantify skill acquisition in culture, and thus there has been no model to follow in this project.

Since the funding of this project, ACTFL has received a grant from National Endowment for the Humanities to conduct a three-week proficiency summer institute in July 1983. This Summer Institute for secondary level teachers of French, German, and Spanish will focus not only on training in oral proficiency interviewing and rating, but also on proficiency-based curriculum development which highlights the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines as the organizing principle. Exercises such as this one will give ACTFL additional feedback not anticipated at the time this proposal was drafted. Therefore ACTFL expects to utilize this project to continue to refine the Guidelines, especially as the Institute participants implement in their fall classes proficiency-based experimental curriculum design this summer.

It is important to recognize that the creation of proficiency guidelines is a dynamic process. Proficiency statements have existed within the confines of the government foreign language training agencies for approximately thirty years, and those statements are still being refined; thus, although the opinion of the profession is that these academic Guidelines are valid and useful, ACTFL feels that it will be desirable to continue to refine these proficiency statements just as the Interagency Language Roundtable continues to refine its proficiency statements.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ACTFL and the foreign language profession are particularly grateful for the support from the Department of Education that enabled the launching of this project, and ACTFL will continue to keep the Department of Education informed as academic proficiency guidelines evolve in less commonly taught languages over the next year.